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# The Greatest Service in the World

BY THE RIGHT REV.  
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MOREHOUSE PUBLISHING CO.  
MILWAUKEE, WIS.

*Printed in England*

45205623 ✓

*To*

THE THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM  
AND OF  
THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF  
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
IN SCOTLAND



## PREFACE

WHEN, two years ago, I received an invitation from the University of Durham to deliver a course of Lectures on Pastoral Theology to those who were preparing for Holy Orders, I accepted the invitation with the greatest interest, partly because of my associations with Durham many years ago, and partly because such an opportunity would force me to review a ministry which in a few years will have covered fifty years. It had been varied in place, seven years in New Zealand, seven years in America, nearly fourteen in Scotland, and the rest in England; and also in conditions, partly teaching in Theological Colleges, partly working as a priest in parishes, and partly administering a Diocese. And the strangest feature of all was that it was not intended by those who felt they had some right to determine my course. My father, after an adventurous life in distant parts of the world, entered the Army. Having served for some years, he married and took Holy Orders. The life of command necessary to the soldier was ill-suited to the work of the ministry, and was made more difficult, as from the very first he threw

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made, what can I say? In the first place, it has had more adventure. When ordained, I had no intention of going abroad to New Zealand, no thought of or wish to work in America. But "there is a Divinity that shapes our ends rough hew them as we will," and, when the time came, it was made quite clear that I was to leave home and cast my little bark on the untried ocean of the Colonies. It is impossible to over-estimate the gain thus bought. There were difficulties and disappointments, trials and troubles, but the advantages were out of all proportion to the disadvantages. I wish I could persuade all my brethren, after a short spell of work at home, to go out to the Colonial or Mission Field, there to see with their own eyes the power of the Gospel amongst those who, in the bush or the newly-built city, have to face the elemental difficulties of life stripped of all conventionalities, and learn afresh that man's need is the same everywhere. In the second place, the ministry has had, I feel, a wider outlook. They in business, or in one of the great professions, have naturally and necessarily been tied up to a somewhat small paddock, over the fence of which they can only look now and again. To the priest, all the fences are down, and every day it is his main work to see how things which seem distant can be brought quite near, and forces which

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seem to belong to another existence are really operative here. The Kingdom of Heaven, he feels, is right in the very midst. He is not guessing as to its probable influence or the date of its expected manifestation. He is living actually in it, just as the chemist in the wonders of his laboratory, or the musician in the harmonies of his instrument or orchestra. He is learning first-hand and all the time what the powers of the world to come are. His profession, if rightly followed out, compels this ; the study, the visits amongst his people, the services in the Church are all profane unless made under the power of the Spirit of God. It is not that the priest intrudes religion into secular or social matters, but that they, so far from being alien, are the material through which religion works. Go deep enough and they are spiritual. There is no division in his mind as to the religious and the secular. So though the effort of faith is serious and sometimes exhausting, it brings its own reward in the larger field and the more distant horizon. He is ever a climber, getting a wider and wider range as he gets up. He makes no boast of this, no more than the Swiss guides whose work it is to be familiar with the great Alpine peaks and the paths that lead to them. It is his necessary work.

Lastly, it has given singular opportunities of knowing Christ's love. In a sense these are

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not unique. Every profession is full of them. But we are not so tempted to neglect them ; on the contrary, we are continually being persuaded and urged to use them. Our service lives by them. The soldier, doctor, lawyer, and statesman are not seldom face to face with occasions of great hazard and danger, where the issue is all uncertain, but they lie outside their duty, and apart from Christ there is no obligation to touch them. They are not found in their direct path. No one will think any worse of them if they pass them by. But to the clergyman they are unavoidable necessities, and woe be to him who avoids them. And they are the times when Christ's presence and power is as surely revealed to them as it was to Sir Ernest Shackleton and his two companions as they crossed from Elephant Island to get relief for those whom they had left behind. "They have known Him in the breaking"—the breaking of their strength, their fortune, and their life, and that knowledge has more than compensated for the danger, toil, and pain His service has brought. In saying this I am not disparaging the wonderful possibilities of service that lie in other directions—in art, letters, medicine, science, law, and Parliament, nor the large tribute they have rendered to Christ. They are open to all eyes, and our great churches commemorate them in worthy monuments. None can forget them. But

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it is this very fact of their wide publicity that has led men to forget or to put aside the striking and memorable services of those whose calling has necessarily kept them out of the sight of the world but very close to the great Captain of our Salvation, and whose sacrifices have led them to such a deep and intimate experience of His love. Like the Apostles, they have been specially commissioned and sent forth, they have continued with Him in His temptations, and, like them, their relationship is therefore very close. Now, looking back on the start made long ago, with wondering curiosity as to what it would bring, whether my father's fears would be justified or my hopes realised, I feel I can give as my considered judgment that same witness which the great preacher Phillips Brooks, out of a very different experience, openly bore before the Divinity students of Yale College :—

“There is no career that can compare with it for a moment in the rich and satisfying relations into which it brings a man with his fellow man, in the deep and interesting insight which it gives him into human nature, and in the chance of the best culture for his own character. Its delight never grows old, its interest never wanes, its stimulus is never exhausted. It is different to a man at each period of his life ; but, if he is the minister he ought to be, there is no age, from the earliest years when he is

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his people's brother to the late days when he is like a father to the children on whom he looks down from the pulpit, in which the ministry has not some fresh charm and chance of usefulness to the man whose heart is in it."

Such I feel it to be. But how could this be shown to those before whom I was to lecture. Phillips Brooks, in his *Lectures on Preaching*, to which these words I have quoted were an introduction, did show that there was one aspect of the ministry which he considered was extraordinarily attractive. But I have been obliged to cover a wider field, to speak of visiting, preparing classes for Confirmation, ministering in the Church, and these, though of high importance, do not awaken much interest in the average man undecided as to what he will do with his life. Further, I am conscious that in my endeavour to fulfil this purpose I may have portrayed an ideal which to some may seem out of reach and to others too remote from the rough facts of the world in which we live. For I have endeavoured to fashion the pattern of the priest after the model of our Lord as He is shown to us in the Gospels. It is necessarily, therefore, the highest standard, and has that remoteness which such an example carries with it, but even with this measure, unattainable as it is, and so far-reaching that the best is a long way behind it, the sketch does seem to justify the

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belief that the ministry is the greatest service in the world. And so I send it forth as it is, trusting that, whether in this way or that, those who are privileged to serve in the sacred ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ may feel about the instrument that the Church places in their hands what David felt about the sword of Goliath, that there is "none like it": "none like it" in its opportunities for making the world a better place than when we found it; "none like it" in the powers that it wields, and in the greatness of the Master it serves.

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# THE GREATEST SERVICE IN THE WORLD

## INTRODUCTION

### A Dialogue

“WHAT are you going to do,” asked a school-master of a promising boy who had just won the Balliol at Oxford, and was leaving. “Well, I haven’t made up my mind, sir. I sometimes think of India, in spite of the great changes in the Indian Civil. I don’t want to spend my days here at home in our little island, things are too crowded, and I think I have inherited the spirit of adventure which was strong in my Elizabethan ancestors. At other times when I read the debates in Parliament I think of politics or, perhaps, the Diplomatic Service, though they tell me it is not what it was. And then, as you know, sir, I love science, and sometimes wonder whether I shouldn’t like to take up medicine—but I really don’t know, and I hope it will be made clear, for father says we were all intended for some particular career—vocation is what he calls it, and I don’t want to make a

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mistake. The only thing really plain to me is that I am not going to be a parson. Some people say parsons make parsons, and as father is a parson I ought to be one, but that is just what I am not going to be. Of course, I know father does a lot of good, the whole village worships him, but I have always thought it a dull sort of life, visiting, taking services, and preaching to people who have been brought up so differently and can't possibly share one's thoughts. I think he does it jolly well, but I could never do that. When we talk over it, as we sometimes do, he says, 'Well, John, you must find your own way as I did. I used to think just as you do, and when I was at Marlborough I had no idea of being a parson, but I would rather be where I am than anywhere, and I believe our service to be the greatest in the world.'"

"Did he ever tell you what made him a parson," said the master, who was an old College friend of his father's and had known him well. "No, he doesn't say much, mainly, I think, because he doesn't want to overpersuade me. I often wondered what it was." "Well, I don't think he would mind my telling you now that you are going up to Oxford: in a way it is an interesting story. When he came up to Trinity, Cambridge, he was just like you, undecided and with an open mind towards everything. We were both

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scholars, and it was our duty to read the lessons in chapel. He was a good reader, and it was that which drew my attention to him, but otherwise he was not what you call a churchy person. The chapel music was good and got hold of him, and he was often in the organ loft—the organist, a young bachelor who had just taken his degree, being a great friend of his—but beyond commenting rather drily on the very indifferent sermons we heard in chapel his religion was a sealed book. He had thoughts of going abroad, and then, after a Union debate, in which he often figured, for he was a good speaker, he would talk about the Bar and going into Parliament, where he would certainly have won distinction. But for his modesty he could have been President of the Union, but when it came to his taking his rightful position, whether in College or University societies, he always held back. Perhaps it was this as much as his gifts that made him so popular. He had hosts of friends, and it was through one of them that he was led to take Holy Orders. This friend was not much of a scholar, and in every respect, except his love for music, very unlike him. He had come up from a private school; his father having retired from the Army with very small means was unable to send him to one of the big schools. He had seen nothing of the schoolboy's world,

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though he wished to take part in it. Keenly interested in sport he never made anything of it, and after being coached for the 1st Trinity was dismissed as hopeless. He was, therefore, a good deal out of College things. A shy person, rather gauche, self-distrustful and nervous, and I often wondered what your father found in him. Perhaps it was that he had what few men have—a sense of vocation, a curious under-consciousness that he was born with a purpose. Had he seen more of the world this wouldn't have been noticed, but with him it almost amounted to priggishness. I fancy his home had been difficult, for he always seemed to be on his guard, and, I used to think, rather morbidly self-conscious. He was, therefore, difficult to know. And I am bound to say I was never particularly anxious to make the effort, and rather resented the claims he made on your father's time. However, as I say, he was a man with a purpose, and, so far, to be respected. I remember his quoting or rather repeating very inaccurately—for he was no scholar and had never had the chance to be one—that passage out of Newman's sermons, in which he says that in the secret hours when the soul recollects and realises itself 'there seem to be but two beings in the whole Universe—itself and God.' And as he stumbled over it in a halting kind of way, as

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though he were half ashamed of mentioning it, I had a feeling that he was repeating the great secret of his life. I must say it didn't take hold of me at the time, but it evidently made a great impression on your father, who asked for the reference and soon became immersed in the *Apologia*, where Newman repeats it as part of his experience. After that they used to be much together in odd moments, your father catching him after hall, and climbing the staircase to an attic room where his friend lived in, I am afraid, rather a spare way. I have no doubt it was this as well as inexperience that kept him out of things. He always seemed short and always afraid of spending money, and in Trinity it was more possible for a man to keep to himself, for each man had his own set.

"Sometimes on a Sunday his friend, who often attended the University sermon, would carry off your father to hear some distinguished preacher. On one occasion I joined them, and I must say, indifferent as I then was to sermons, I was much stirred when these words came like a lightning flash, illuminating all the dark mystery within, and calling for self-realisation. I wrote them down afterwards and they lie in my central drawer table. Here they are," he said, pulling out two sheets of paper, and then he began to read, "'To-day is a

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day of calls, a call for the first time or a call a hundred times repeated; a call bearing on some vocation and ministry appointed in God's order to every member of His Church, and from which no one may without guilt excuse himself; a call which raises the memories, sad or thankful, of the past, which holds up claims and duties from which there is no escape. . . . What is it that is involved in the answer? It is no mere passive resignation and yielding to the Divine call. It is not merely shutting our eyes and saying, "Let what He wills come on me." It is more than that. The call comes to living souls, to human consciences, to human wills, to human purposes. It asks for conscious, deliberate union with the Divine Will. It asks that we should associate and identify our own real wishes and desires with what we know of our Master's, and that we should work in His cause as all men work for a cause they have at heart.'

"As we left the church and walked on towards Madingley your father was very quiet, but his friend burst forth in unexpected volubility. I can remember his excitement as though it were yesterday. 'That is just it; we can't escape it, we can't escape it. I have again and again tried. I don't want to be where He is, I know, calling me. I want to have my freedom like anyone else, to do this

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to-day and that to-morrow. But He has hedged me about and made escape impossible, and I know I shall make a mess of it. I have no gifts for it, no experience that would make me at home in it, no inner liking for it, no tact, and no power of expression. I never made a speech in my life, and though I like people I am always shy when I am with them. But what am I saying?' He then stopped as suddenly as he began, apologised for talking about himself, and we turned to other things. Before we separated, however, we promised to meet again next Sunday at Great St Mary's to hear the preacher again, for he was to give two sermons. We were not surprised to find the church crowded this time, for there had been a good deal of talk, both amongst the undergraduates and the dons, about what he had said. He went back to what he had said the Sunday before, and specially applied it to the work of the ministry. He spoke of its ideals and the difficulty of maintaining them.

"That which in its idea is the divinest of earthly employments has necessarily come to be also a profession, a line of life with its routine, its commonplace, its poverty and deterioration of motive, its coarseness of feeling. It cannot but be so. It is part of the condition of our mortality. Even earnest purpose, even zealous and laborious service

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cannot alone save from the lowered tone and dulness of spirit which are our insensible but universal and inveterate enemies in all the business of real life. And that torpor and insensibility and deadness to what is high and great is, more than any other evil, the natural foe of all that is characteristic and essential in the Christian ministry: for that ministry is one of life and reality or it is nothing. You hear people say that it is not a high calling, that it wants a great and lofty idea, that there are nobler paths for effort and sacrifice. They say that it is too easy; that it is not free; that it is too bustling, too much occupied and cut up with small anxieties and petty duties. It is, they say, a poor career for a man. Is it indeed? This you may depend upon. It is that which you make it. It may be the highest if you will; it will be the lowest if you will not make it high. It was, indeed, a miserable doom shadowed forth in the request which the outcast priest should make, "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices that I may eat a piece of bread." But what has that to do with the office which is meant to be given you—that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord, to teach and to premonish, to feed and to provide for the Lord's family, to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children that are in the midst of this

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naughty world that they may be saved through Christ for ever? Is not that high enough, is not that attractive enough for the largest thoughts, for the noblest aspirations, for the most earnest life?'

" Much more, of course, he said, but this remained with us, and we left wondering whether we ought not to respond. We turned into King's, always a favourite place for your father, and I shall never forget the extraordinary power of the anthem bringing home with a new fervour all we had been hearing. ' How beautiful, how beautiful are those that bring tidings of peace.' The words were borne in upon angels' wings and with angels' voices. We seemed, the whole chapel seemed, as though carried away by a great song that had but one message for its burden, the amazing privilege of the ministry. So again, through other avenues, it had reached us and twined itself round and round about our hearts. What my friends thought I don't know, for we were all caught in the stream of those leaving the chapel, and your father carried away to others' rooms. What he felt I never knew. Some weeks after I was vexed to hear that he had overstrained in the Trials—we had all made sure of his blue—and was ordered by the doctor to lie still for weeks. It was a terrible disappointment to him; and his numerous friends were all besieging his staircase with

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various plans for cheering up. But they were quite unnecessary, no one seemed more cheery and jolly than he. 'I am awfully glad,' so he said, 'that I have made room for Chisholm, who is a much better oar and far more deserving the place in every way.' I often went to see him. One day when I was alone with him he said, 'You know I have often been perplexed what to do with my life, and this is my last year. I am now quite clear; I am going to take Holy Orders. My parents don't like it; they say, "It is throwing your life away. You might as well be a farmer in the country and look after pigs." I should have said the same six months ago. But that first sermon coming on the top of Newman's lightning flash—you know what I mean—made me certain God had something He wished me to do; the second sermon made it clear that this wish was expressed in the ministry of Jesus Christ. And this enforced lying-by has given me time to think it out. Do you know,' he said with his happy smile, 'I think I shall like it, though I feel I am talking through my hat. I have never known a parson, and never seen anything of his life—all my experience is the other way.' I was not much surprised with this, but I sympathised with his parents in the loss of all their expectations, for he might have done anything he liked, family, brains, character, a winning

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attractive manner, it seemed a sacrifice of great opportunities, but he has never looked back and, as you know, thinks the ministry the greatest service in the world, and I am tempted to agree with him.

"As you know I have been here twenty-five years, and, of course, have had opportunities of learning what some of our best feel about their professions. Many of my old pupils come back from these, and with them others before my time, some distinguished, some who have never attained prominence. We have had cabinet ministers, judges, generals, bishops, as well as business men, doctors, and clergy. And in the quiet of the evening they sometimes talk freely of their experiences. Of course, they are all interested in their sons and their careers, and as they look back they also look forward. And the General says, 'I am not sending — into the Army, it is no longer the same thing that it was in my time. Then it was a good social club, and you were fairly sure of knowing whom you would meet.' And the Judge says, 'I used to swear by the Bar, but the top places are now the spoils of politics, and without the prizes it is a dog's life.' And the Ambassador says, 'When I started, the Diplomatic Service was the best in the world, extraordinarily interesting and fascinating, mainly because of its secrecy, but nowadays everything is known before you are well in

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it.' And the Schoolmaster says, 'School driving is a hard and tiresome job though there are big prizes, but I never knew a man who wasn't jolly glad to get out of it when a good opening occurred.' And so on and so on. It is curious how little content there is, and how general the desire to push a boy into business for which he may have no vocation. The two exceptions to the general discontent are oddly enough the clergy and the doctors. I always love to have a parson in the study for his sociability, humour, and happiness. It is the rarest thing to hear him grouse about his profession or whine over its poverty. He is full of amusing stories, some of them against himself, and extraordinarily hopeful about the Church. He strikes one as having preserved his youth better than the members of any profession, and yet no one does a better day's work. The doctor is happy, too, about his profession, but rather more serious and taciturn. So I sometimes feel that in spite of the inroads of democracy, for which I know many are profoundly thankful, the clerical profession excites a warmer regard and affection amongst its own members than any other. And, personally, I am not sorry that for most clergy it means a large sacrifice. I think that is the secret of its astonishing vitality. If it were disestablished, and I think you may live to see it, it would not be less

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attractive but rather more so to the finer spirits of the nation. Poverty has never been a bar to the men of venture.

"As I look back on our national history, I do not hesitate to say that the men who have rendered the most important service to the country have either been the clergy or those who have sprung out of clerical homes. On the whole, I expect it would be found on examination that the missionaries have done more than the diplomats, and the bishops more than the judges, the preachers more than the barristers, and the parish priests more than the politicians for the progress of mankind. Looking back over the history of the critical periods of human advancement since the birth of Christ, such as the fall of Rome and the dissolution of the Empire, the conquest of Constantinople and the Renaissance, the break up of the old feudal system and the era of political liberty, it is the names of men like Augustine, Erasmus, Colet, More, Fénelon, John Wesley, Lacordaire, Kingsley, and Maurice that stand out as the wise and far-seeing directors of movements. And in the great wars, revolutions, and political troubles through which our country has passed, it is I expect the life and bearing of the country vicarages, with the good that has radiated out from them, that has kept England stable. This is not to ignore the fact that the Church,

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as a whole, has been slow to see the signs of the times, and that it has been disfigured and disgraced by indolence, luxury, and vice. All would acknowledge that, but is there any profession that is free from this? And considering the publicity of their life and its manifold temptations it is surprising how few, comparatively, the lapses are and how high the standard reached. But I have said more than I intended. I have no wish to press Holy Orders on anyone. The only possibility of its being what it ought depends on its freedom. I believe with your father that everyone has a vocation, and I also believe that if you seek God's guidance about it you will find it. I look forward with hope that wherever you go or whatever you do you will uphold the honour of the school."

"Thank you, sir, for speaking so freely. I shan't forget, and will do my best at Oxford to be a credit to the old school, and then some day I shall see my way."

## CHAPTER I

### Magnificence of the Aim

THE first question naturally asked about any profession is, "What does it set out to do?" It is true that some selfish people may ask "what salary is attached to it—what am I likely to make out of it," but that is not what the man who is facing life seriously will say: he wants to know "what purpose does it serve—of what use is it?" He wishes to be of service, and is inclined to measure the profession or business to which he is invited by the opportunities it offers.

Before, then, we try to explain some of the duties the life of a priest involves, it will be well to make clear what its aim and purpose is. This is not easy to describe, for it is as wide as life itself. Being the service of Jesus Christ it has an infinite character, and it would not be easy to say what is not included. It does, indeed, cover the work of all the professions, and He has been well served in them all. The army, the navy, law, medicine and business have all provided splendid illustrations of the Christ-

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life, and the clergy have served in them all. It would not be true to say that any vocation is lower than that of the Ministry.

Every profession may be a divine call, a real service of Christ—but there is this unique distinction about Holy Orders that it means a closer association with Christ, and a nearer following of His example as set forth in the Gospels than any other. The priest is brought very near to Him, must be, indeed, on almost intimate terms as His friend if the work is to be done adequately. So there is a real justification for the phrase so often used of a man taking Holy Orders, namely, that he is entering the Church. Though strictly untrue, for he did that when he was baptized, yet in the sense in which it is used, akin to entering the army, going into law or medicine, it has a proper meaning as indicating that he will be absorbed in the interests of the Church, make them his first care, study as to how they may best be served, work for their promotion, give "himself wholly to them," as the Prayer Book says. This will, of course, mean a sacrifice akin to that which any profession calls for. But nobody really minds this provided he is keen about the goal that is aimed at. To promote justice, to keep the flag unsullied by making good sailors and soldiers, to make the nation healthy,

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call out the best in the lawyer, the officer, the doctor, and they bend their energies to that task. So to make good Christians, which is the purpose of the ministry, at once awakens the enthusiasm of the priest and he sacrifices all to the fulfilment of this high task. Of course, it must be seen in its greatness, seen as He saw it, if we are to be fired by it. We shall, therefore, devote this chapter to its aim, that you who feel you are called to the ministry may see what you are out for. And we shall be helped in getting this clear if we find out what His purpose was, for we are linked on to that. What He sought we shall seek; what He aimed at, will be our aim. What He is still doing, we must do.

I. THE AIM.—First, then, what was His aim? What did He set before Himself as the great purpose of His ministry? That will be the subject of my first lecture. He tells us—"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for man"—"not to be ministered unto"—not to be the object of attention, consideration, and service—not to be run after, idolised, adored (though all that naturally came to Him), but to save men and to bring them out of bondage by dying for them. That was His programme. Negatively we may say it was to save mankind. "This is

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a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," *i.e.* to deliver them out of danger, to free them from peril. But that is only one side. It is more important in these days, perhaps, to lay stress on the positive, not on the danger from which He delivers us so much as the goal towards which He worked. What was that? It is quite plain in the words "therefore you shall be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

There can be no more inspiring object than this. The doctor aims at physical perfection, abounding health and vigour: the teacher at intellectual perfection, a mind accurate and well-proportioned, able to think clearly and express itself in the most appropriate language. The pastor, also, aims at fulness of life issuing in moral perfection, showing fineness of character, which is not only absolutely trustworthy and to be counted on at all times, but so attractive in its gentleness and strength, its joyousness and patience, its broad humanity and spiritual devotion, that it wins its way in spite of the world's hostility. We might say such an object is beyond us, but no one can assert that it does not inspire and stimulate, and as set forth by our Lord to His disciples it places a definite ideal before them—not simply that *ye shall be perfect*, but "*perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*" Imagine

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the effect of the teacher upon his class if he were to say to his pupils, "My aim is not merely that you should become scholars, but such scholars as Lightfoot and Westcott." So here, not simply perfect but as perfect in your own sphere as God is in His. This suggests the formation of the very highest character, the fullest personality. This wonderful aim alone explains the mysterious and tremendous powers lodged in the Church and the Sacraments, and the immensity of the sacrifice involved in the Incarnation and Death of Christ; it is to make men "like God."

Now we may well believe that this perfection of Humanity to which He looked forward was part of the joy that was set before Him, that led Him to endure the Cross and despise the shame, and was it not this that gave Him such a profound interest in human beings? It was not what they were, but what they would become. Now, if we ask what are the features of this perfection, we find them in Christ's life. He is the Perfect One as the whole world admits—perfect in His purity and loftiness of aim, in His meekness and strength, in His wisdom and utterance, in His deeds and their motive, in His relations with His Father and in His relations with mankind, in His faith and fulness of trust, in His love shown in life and death. There it is in the Gospels plain for everyone to read—

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the one standard for all men. "One life," as Dean Church says, "is the guiding light and the words which express it speak to all—a life the highest conceivable on almost the lowest conceivable stage and recorded in the simplest form, with indifference to all outward accompaniments, attractive whether to the few or to the many. This is set before us as the final and unalterable ideal of human nature amid all its continual and astonishing changes. Differing as widely as men do, Christ calls them all alike to follow Him. Unspeakably great as His example is, it is for the many and the average as much as for the few. Homely as is its expression, there is no other lesson for the deepest and most refined. The least were called to its high goodness; the greatest had nothing offered them but its brief-spoken plainness. 'Ye shall become perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect' meant 'Ye shall become like Me,' for He was the express image of God."

Now, if men facing this magnificent promise had asked, "Lord, how is this to be? how can we climb to this height?" He might have said, as He did say in answer to another question, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible," and then He might have gone further and said, "I have made all preparations for this attainment; trust Me and you shall be carried forward.

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The Perfect One is your Teacher at present, and when He leaves His place will be taken by His Spirit. All the burdens of sin and ignorance with which you are at present burdened will be removed by My death which makes your start fair, and then He, the Perfect One, will indwell you so that you will be carried forward stage by stage till all will rejoice in you as a perfect human being." That was the aim; and before we pass from it, get it well into your minds; let no one rob you of it. Think for a moment what store we ourselves set on even partial perfection! With what admiration we regard perfect beauty whether in the flower or the human face, and what praise we lavish upon it! Think how we are carried away by a perfect speech or a perfect piece of acting! Recall the joy you felt in what you called a perfect painting or what you felt to be perfect music; and how much you thought of the gardener, the parent, the teacher, the maestro who had a hand in giving such joy to mankind. How clever they were! How patient! How persevering! And now how proud they must be! And perfection of character is much more attractive than these outward perfections—the man who, though innocent, took the whole blame of the regiment on his own shoulders that the flag should not be smirched; the nurse who signed away her

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life to get her soldier boys safe home ; the doctor who, knowing the risks he ran, sacrificed his life to get the remedy that was to save thousands of incurables ; the missionary who changed the whole life of a savage island by the beauty of his character—well something of that is our vocation as it was His ; we are to be His instruments in shaping human character to the very finest and best.

The world thinks otherwise of your profession. Some will speak of it as “the cloth,” as though in putting on a new dress you were going to live a cloistered life apart from man and man’s interests ; others of becoming a parson, *i.e.* being a kind, good-natured person who will perform services, look after the sick and dispense relief to the poor ; others of “taking Orders,” “entering Holy Orders”—words full of real and high significance, but so often used in a professional way as though men became part of a close corporation, an Order like that of the Jesuits, or a union, like one of the many trades unions, formed to conserve the interests of the clergy. And the pictures of clergy in fiction or on the stage encourage this poor, feeble conception of kindliness without strength, spirituality without depth, innocence without manliness. This is not what the New Testament or the Prayer Book suggests, but, on the contrary, the purpose they set forth is to vitalise a dying humanity,

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to drive out the spirit of torpor and death, to heal the sick in body and mind, to quicken the dead, and to form such characters as may by their good works glorify their Father which is in Heaven. Unless you are prepared for this you had better withdraw. For the life of a parson, as sketched by Jane Austen, George Eliot, Thackeray, and Anthony Trollope, will be found to be tedious in the extreme, and so out of harmony with the New Testament that every time you read it you will feel uncomfortable doubts as to whether you have really been called to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, or only to the service of a rather feeble state organisation.

II. THE MATERIAL IS EVERY MAN.—But we now ask where is the material out of which these perfect beings are to be created? Out of what class of humanity is this fine character to be produced? Out of no class because out of every class. The material is everywhere. The plants are not to be found in any sheltered glass house, or show garden, but on the wild heath and in the marshes and morasses. The common people, of whom no one had any hope and whom the religious people of His day called “accursed,” because they were not clever and knew not the law, as well as the gentle and well to do, the educated and influential—of all these He would say, “Ye shall be perfect, as perfect as My Father in

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Heaven is perfect." And that no one should feel left out He made special friends with the aliens and refuse of society, those who from love of money had adopted scandalous professions or from lust had lived licentious lives. There is Peter the fisherman, cursing and swearing when he was overtaken by temptation, and thus showing his original rough nature, exalted to be head of the great Apostolic College. There is his friend John, naturally a Boanerges, becoming the gentle disciple of love and one of the greatest teachers of mankind. There is the narrow-minded bigot Saul, persecuting and harrying the Church, forcing his captives to blaspheme the Holy Name, and yet becoming the large-hearted, generous and unselfish St Paul. And these are only samples of what He did. "He lifteth up the simple out of the dust," gives them a new life bursting with energy and issuing in a character that was the astonishment of all who saw it. Now, Jesus Christ is the same to-day as in that far-off yesterday, and can use you for the same high purposes, but you must share His Spirit, feel His faith in men and women, believe with Him in their grand possibilities. For He, as you know, was never tired of showing the value of man as man. He saw that in the thought of His day as of ours man was often disparaged because he was without

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money or influence, or because he had outraged society by a bad life. So He would take them to Himself, and when the righteous pointed at them He would say that they were as dear to Him and to the heart of God as one sheep in a small flock of a hundred was to the farmer, or as one silver piece in a woman's treasured necklace was to its owner, or as one child in a family of two to the father. More precious indeed than we can tell. And to make the illustration more telling, He would show us the farmer seeking the clefts of the rocks and the pits in the marshes for that one sheep which now fills his whole mind, or the woman busy with candle and brush to find her one coin which for the moment is more precious than the whole necklace, and the father with his little family reduced to one ever taking his walk to the top of the hill in the hopes of seeing the prodigal returning: and then He would picture the joy to God when the lost is found, and listen to all the citizens of Heaven rejoicing. From all His teaching it was plain that man was evidently something very precious, something He would not do without, that He must have even if getting them means an immense deal of trouble. If only He had them what would He not make of them. We marvel at human skill—that of Michael Angelo, who will take a

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block of marble and work out of it a dream of loveliness ; that of Fra Angelico, who will take canvas, hair and pigments, and out of it there flashes for all time an unforgettable face of human beauty ; that of Tennyson and Browning, who will take ink, paper and pen, and then for us there comes lines of letters, that bring a smile of satisfaction even in pain and sorrow. But these wonderful results are not to be compared with those of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the race, who will take some piece out of the wreck of humanity, a piece repulsive and ugly, and yet fashion out of it some saint whose slightest regard we should feel to be a high favour.

Now, you must share His mind in this. And if you do you will feel it matters not whether you go to the town or the country, to a pit-village or an agricultural parish, your material is just what He had. Neither their poverty nor their ignorance, neither their plainness of feature nor their strange accent, neither their awkwardness, nor their slowness, neither their shallowness nor their impulsiveness can make any difference—as members of the human family redeemed by Christ they are priceless, and only if we so regard them as such can we hope to make them what God wants them to be. So to him who is called to the Priesthood the Church commits his flock in these remarkable words,

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“Have always therefore printed in your remembrance how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which He bought with His death and for whom He shed His blood.” (Then the metaphor changes and becomes more intimate). “The Church and congregation whom you must serve is His *Spouse* and His Body. And if it should happen to the same Church or any member thereof to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence you know the greatness of the fault and also the horrible punishment that will ensue.” “How great a treasure!” “Bought with His Blood!” “His Spouse!” Nothing that I have said approach these great descriptions, and yet we hear now and again a shepherd saying, “The whole lot of them not worth a two-penny piece”—so stupid, so obstinate, so ignorant!

III. EVERY MAN NOT THE CROWD.—But in this new value of man do not be led astray by the great expression which “Ecce Homo” made so attractive—the enthusiasm of humanity. Remember it was always the individual, never the crowd, that impressed Christ. He had compassion on the multitude because it was hungry and without a shepherd, but it awaked no enthusiasm in Him. Masses of men and women were dangerous and easily led wrong.

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One day they would cry "Hosanna!" another, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" One day they would urge Him to be their King, and the next they would forsake Him. He evidently distrusted their outward expression of devotion which now and again they showed, and would turn and say hard things to them. Indeed, He seems to have failed in the conversion of cities and villages. Some of His most tremendous judgments are passed on the big places that knew Him best. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto Heaven? Thou shalt go down into Hades, for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained unto this day. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, your house is left unto you desolate." But, on the other hand, to His own friends He would say, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes—even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thine eyes." He felt that human nature, taken in the mass, was difficult, but

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individually it was exceedingly interesting. Those who have best known His mind have shared this estimate. Robert Browning, according to Mr Chesterton, was a great lover of men and women, but he had no great interest in humanity. "To him the individual wore all the masks of Deity—the heads of a hundred-headed Indian god of nature. Each one of them looked towards some quarter of the heaven unvisited by any other eye. Each one of them wore some expression, some blend of eternal joy and eternal sorrow not to be found in any other countenance. The sense of the absolute sanctity of human difference was the deepest of all his senses. He was hungrily interested in all human things, but it would have been quite impossible to have said of him that he loved humanity. He did not love humanity, but men. His sense of the difference between one man and another would have made the thought of melting them into a lump called humanity simply loathsome and prosaic. It would have been to him like playing four hundred beautiful airs at once. The mixture would not combine at all, it would lose all. Browning believed that every man that ever lived upon this earth had been given a definite and peculiar confidence of God. Each one of us was engaged in secret service; each one of us had a peculiar message; each one

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of us was the founder of a religion. Of that religion our thoughts, our faces, our bodies, our hats, our boots, our tastes, our virtues, and even our vices were more or less fragmentary and inadequate expressions." Men and women, but not humanity, was his creed. And it was that conviction that made Robert Browning not only such a happy man, but such a genius in interpreting human motives and character—he knew men because he valued and loved them, and rejoiced in their difference.

So, too, it was with a very different teacher—Father Dolling. He loved the men and women, the boys and girls he knew, and it was they who gave him his sense of what the Church is. "His power," writes Canon Ottley, "was primarily and originally of the heart—wonderful warmth and tenderness of love. He had in unique degree the power of entering into the lives, thoughts, feelings of others, and particularly of what was best, truest, most human and divine in them, and this not with reference to any class or either sex, but to each and all, to rich and poor, working men in their curious reserve and outward cynicism, with their democratic independence and radicalism; men of the world with their devotion to duty and pleasure; soldiers and sailors of whatever rank; the shawled and hatless East End girls in their

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rowdy humours, and the fastidious promenaders of the Park ; men of commerce and servants in smart houses, or a boy at a public school, he seemed inspired to understand the life, the ideas of each and all—to see with their eyes and feel with their hearts, and that living, moving society of human beings separately known and loved and sanctified in Christ was the Church." For, as we shall see later, though it could not be said that Christ had enthusiasm for humanity, He had a strange and wonderful affection for the Church. These men and women were not to be isolated fragments, but members of a living body, stones in a great building, branches of a beautiful vine.

IV. NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY My SPIRIT.—But granted that we must recognise the amazing possibilities that lie in *EVERYMAN*, how are they to be realised ? What intelligible ground is there for believing that no matter what his position, intelligence, or outward surroundings may be, he has something which will respond to the touch of God. There are some people like the harp which Watt's picture of Hope holds in his hand. All the strings seem to be broken. Yes—all but one. The Leader of our hope still bends over the instrument that is all but done. There is one string left which will bring music to His ear.

For this optimism about the shawled and

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hatless girls, the working men, the shuffling man in the street, the rich and luxurious has a real foundation. There is a good reason for believing that beautiful and priceless vases may be made out of rough earthenware. What rare and wonderful flowers may spring out of the dry and apparently barren soil!

This hope does not lie in the body, for many are born maimed and crooked, or disfigured. And do what the doctors and surgeons can, they cannot alter that first inheritance. They may disguise its ugliness, straighten out its limbs, but the malformation remains, often a blessing but never what it might have been. Nor does it lie in the mind—that amazing heritage of man. And it is good that it does not lie there, for the race would be too unequal. For large numbers of people—"mostly fools," as Carlyle says in his rough way—take the world over, have not much mind. But neither body nor mind are man's greatest treasure, it is the spirit that counts. Let us try to realise this afresh.

The body counts for something, of course, and the care for it in health, dress, cleanliness, and refinement, is of importance. It is the Temple of the Spirit, and the spirit is greatly affected by it. So, too, the mind, *that* counts for much more. We are right in our wish

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to have educated people in our congregations, we feel there is more hope for our message if they understand. But body and mind are inferior to spirit. Spirit is the crown of man. It is the spirit that gives him distinction ; it is this that differentiates him from the lower organisms out of which he sprang.

For thousands of years, far more than we can number, the mind was dormant or at least hard to be distinguished from that purposive action found in all animals. And had some prophet arisen amongst the tribes of prehistoric men dwelling in caves, lake dwellings, and forests, and said that a day would come when the earth would be covered with universities, colleges, and schools, that paper with strange signs upon it would count more than axes, daggers and hatchets, who would have believed him ? But before this could be done, the hand of God was needed. No development of mind was possible apart from God. And so God breathed into him and man became psychic and the mind became conscious, reflective and connative. Prehistoric man passed into the man that began history ; this was written at first only in weapons, instruments of industry, dwellings, but as the years rolled on, thousands of decades it may be, its expression became more beautiful as in the pictures, music, drama, literature, of to-day. But though he had mind, not

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yet was he full man. Not yet, no not in cultured Greece or Imperial Rome was there the possibility of a St John or a St Paul: not yet could the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, or the 8th chapter of Romans have been written—something was lacking. This was the awakening and growth of the spirit. Spirit had been dormant; flashing up now and again in seers and prophets like Socrates and Buddha, it had gained consciousness and expression: and it worked wonders in Israel as we see in the prophets. But these were abnormal effects. The promise "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh" was yet unfulfilled. Then in the fulness of time Christ came, the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and on Him the Spirit was poured without measure, every part of His humanity was immersed in it, His words were spirit and life. His actions were inspired by the Spirit. He cast out devils by the Spirit. He made His great offering and sacrifice in the Spirit. He was raised by the Spirit, and so He being thus in the Spirit was also able to communicate the Spirit to others. And on Easter Day He who had thousands of years before breathed on man and awakened the mind, again breathed on man and awakened the spirit. "He breathed on them and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Spirit,

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as the Father hath sent Me even so send I you; whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained.’’ So through and in the Church the spirit of man was quickened and awakened by the Spirit of Christ, and on Pentecost its outward expression was manifested when simple-hearted, uneducated men and women were not only discovered to have great thoughts of God and His plans for men, but able to communicate them to others, even those who did not speak their own mother-tongue. So the Kingdom of God came, and man was able to rise to his high destiny. Our Lord had been preaching, and had sent His disciples to preach the glory of the Kingdom. He had in wonderful parables explained some of its mysteries. But He was continually misunderstood. The Jews, as a whole, supposed it was a great earthly kingdom like those of the world, a new Republic of which Jesus Christ would be the Head. But it was really a Kingdom of Spirit. And Jesus Christ was its first beginning, its Alpha as well as Omega. It had its own laws, its own authority, its own mysterious powers manifested in healings and judgments. But nobody could see it or enter into it unless his spirit faculty had been quickened by the Holy Ghost. ‘‘Except a man be born of

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the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." "The natural or psychic man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned." As Nature requires a special faculty in order that its beauties may be discerned and loved, as the Realm of Mind also requires a faculty for its interpretation, so, too, the Kingdom of Heaven required a special power to see its sights and hear its sounds. The psychic or natural man does not perceive it nor understand it, and until men are begotten again and spiritually born they are as much outside its realities as the blind and deaf are outside the sights and sounds of the world. This birth the Apostles had experienced through the power of Christ, and He greatly rejoiced over it. "Blessed are your eyes," He said, "for they see, and your ears for they hear." Heaven and its Kingdom had been opened to them, and they rejoiced in its marvels. It is difficult for us who seem to see so little of the transforming power of the Spirit to-day to realise what this awakening meant, for just as the body was influenced by the mind, and the cultured Greek or proud Roman were different in form and build and look from the savage, so, too, body and mind were alike influenced by the power

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of the Spirit. The appearance as well as the intelligence were transformed—humble and insignificant Christians acquired a distinction and importance, of which the cultured were without. Indeed the Christian was / an enigma. Very often he had neither birth nor education, and sometimes his body was misshapen and his mind feeble, and yet there was something about him which made him superior to those who had conspicuous gifts. He was seen to have a value quite independent of birth, position or education. He was a constant surprise, for he counted for something. “Are not all these which speak Galileans, and yet how hear we every man in our language?” “Now when they” (and “they” means a very hard, insensible, cruel set of men—high priests, rulers and such like) “when *they* saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.” “And all that sat in the Council looking steadfastly on him saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” “And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.’” It was always the same—the Christians counted, wherever they were, whatever they did or said caused genuine surprise to the ordinary unbelievers, for they had something which

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expressed power. It was not natural or inherited power but something independent of man's human equipment or circumstances. "Not many wise with merely human wisdom, not many of position and influence, not many of noble birth, and yet in spite of these disadvantages God hath chosen things which are foolish to put wise men to shame; and things which the world regards as destitute of influence, to put its powerful things to shame; and the things which the world regards as base and those which it sets utterly at naught—things that have no existence—God has chosen in order to reduce to nothing things that do exist, to prevent any mortal man from boasting in the presence of God." And all this power of spiritual force through the Spirit. So, too, many a Christian priest of experience might write to-day. It is not by might nor by power but by Spirit.

Smiles wrote an admirable book, entitled *Self-Help*, and there shows what determination has done in the sphere of intellect in bringing to positions of great influence and power those who had nothing to start with: a much greater book might be written, named *Spirit-Help*, illustrating the amazing moral power unknown Christians have exercised in shaping the destinies of men, the unparalleled moral beauty of the saints.

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It is in this remarkable sphere you are called to work. In a variety of ways, some of which will be indicated, you are to be God's instrument in bringing the music out of that one string which to many a man is all that is left to him. His body may be weakened by sin, his mind soddened by drink, there seems nothing to appeal to, and yet beneath the rubbish there is this strange spirit faculty which is waiting for God's touch to leap into life.

V. AWAKENING OF THE SPIRIT.—But for the awakening of the spirit a new birth is essential, and you are to be the minister of the new birth. As it is to the doctor that we look for the birth of the body, and to the teacher for the birth of the mind, so it is to the priest that we look for the birth of the spirit. "You may have ten thousand teachers," wrote St Paul to the Corinthians, "but you have only one father, for in Christ I begat you by the gospel to the Life Everlasting." Many of us do not like the word "Father" applied to the priest, because it has had a bad history, and is generally narrowly applied, in a technical and official sense, to unmarried clergy and bishops, but it has a real value, testifying to spiritual birth. But just as there may be doctors who have never assisted at a birth, and dead teachers from whom you could never expect

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intellectual birth, so, it is to be feared, there are barren clergy from whom you would never expect spiritual children. But this sterility is not due to their being married, or outside the ranks of the Episcopate. It is partly due to their ignorance and lack of experience, and partly to the fact that they have never been taught to look for spiritual children as the result of their ministry. So long as the children are baptized and confirmed, and become communicants, they are satisfied, and yet, as we know, there are many to whom these blessed means of grace have never brought awakening. Every mission reveals many who have no consciousness of God. All such must be first sent back to their baptism. For baptism is the first great epoch in the life of the spirit. By it the human spirit is immersed in the life-giving nature of the God-Man Christ Jesus. It is mysteriously quickened by the Spirit who endows it with Christ's glorified humanity. And this first step may be compared to the placing of the seed in the ground when all the nourishing elements of the soil begin to play upon it, and to change it. In our language it is regenerated, and the infinite possibilities of saintliness and perfection ought, if care is taken, to be realised. That this new life is unconscious to the mind of the infant is no reason for supposing that it is

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unreal. All life is very still at its beginning. But because it is still we must not suppose that it will grow without the co-operation of the Church into which it is placed. It must be born out of the water and the spirit into which it has been immersed, *i.e.* it must show those evidences of birth which all infant life shows, some sight, and some movement, and some sense of sound. Though through regeneration they are members of Christ, the children of God, and heirs of the Kingdom, yet we cannot say that they are all conscious of God, all stretching out their hands to Him as the infants do to their mothers, all beginning to walk in newness of life. That would be to shut our eyes to plain facts, and to misread the spiritual phenomena of our parishes. It is true that infant birth does not mean much sight, nor much hearing, nor very full consciousness, but it does imply some. If there were no signs of these movements, and no cry of desire, it would be rightly conceived to be still-born. Birth does mean something. And when St Paul speaks of his coming through baptism and conversion into the consciousness of Christ as an "untimely birth," he is using the word in its ordinary plain signification. Therefore with many of those entrusted to you, your first duty will be to awaken that spirit-life which is dormant within them. You know

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it is there, and you may be sure the Spirit of God will enable you, if you take such steps as you can, to develop its consciousness; but not only must you never forget that this perfection can only be realised in the Church, but that the ultimate aim is the glory of the body not the beauty of each limb. This work needs necessarily the greatest care. The gardener sows the seed with infinite hope. He expects to see the shoot appear, and his very expectancy leads him to work and watch lest the object of his desire and hopes should never appear. The waste of physical life in seeds and eggs is prodigious. Millions of things that ought to be born never are. Lack of care, enemies, and a thousand obstacles prevent the realisation of their destiny. It will be your care to see that none of those committed to your care fail of their glorious inheritance.

I have said enough to show you what a glorious opportunity you have. Nothing in the world is so interesting as human nature. Our love of fiction and the drama shows that. It can rise to great heights or sink to the deepest depths; saints and criminals come out of the same stock. Well, it is your great privilege to make saints, to see growing under your hand by the power of the Spirit the most beautiful thing in the world, a Christ-like character. Here there are no inherited draw-

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backs which are strong enough to withstand the grace of God. Indeed, some of the most unlikely seeds bear the most wonderful fruits. Christ's law is being constantly fulfilled—the last become first and the first become last. Men of no position, like Isidore the ploughman or Servetus the beggar, rise to heights of great saintliness; women of small intellectual ability, like Joan of Arc or Catherine of Siena, become queens in the Church of God. The offspring of drunkards, like Mary Slessor, become saints, and those who once were known as criminals rise to the dignity of moral guides. You never know where this wonder will appear, and when it grows up under your hands you feel that this alone would justify the hopes that animated you when you decided to obey the call to the ministry. Other men have gone down to posterity because as gardeners they have discovered a new bloom, or as scientific men they have found a new secret of nature, or as doctors a new drug to alleviate the ills of mankind, or as travellers because they have seen the hitherto unknown source of some great river, but your distinction will be that not once nor twice you have been God's Hand in touching and releasing the hidden springs of some life out of which there now flow rivers of living water, bringing life and greatness wherever they go. It is true that this is only a

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beginning towards that perfect life which little by little will develop. But the start once made, the consciousness of a Divine purpose and strength to match it, will day by day lead to ever fuller and fuller co-operation, and He who has begun a good work will perfect it till the day of Jesus Christ, and so the goal will be reached. Is not this reward enough for your labour? Is not this joy enough for all your toil and sorrow? Was any service more fully requited? What more can you ask? And yet the more, the great deal more, is yours in the love and praise of Him who called you to it and has given you the wisdom for it.

## CHAPTER II

### The Joy of Finding

WE have now set before ourselves the aim of all our work, to awaken, develop, strengthen and deepen the spirit of Man. Our work is not that of the teacher to enlighten and inform the mind, nor that of the social reformer so to help forward the necessary changes in the state that the Spirit may be the more free to exercise His powers, but that of the pastor who, while necessarily sympathising with the teacher and reformer, yet recognises his special task is different from theirs—that is, to bring every member of his congregation, every parishioner to “that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ so that no place is found for error in religion or viciousness of life,” *i.e.* that Christ absorbs the whole nature, has dominion over each part. The words are strong, suggesting a careful watching, such as the nurse exercises over the child or the gardener over the plant, noting each day some fresh development, some new trait, some fresh proof of growth.

We now ask where are we to begin? To

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visit every household in the parish and then proceed without discrimination would mean grievous loss of time and ultimate failure. Families, like areas in the mission-field, are not all equally ready. It is puzzling, and we must find out from Him what His plan was who came to save the whole world. Now in His loving desire to help everyone, whether Eastern or Western, He was obliged to go forward in a certain order. It was impossible to think of covering the whole ground. Rome! Athens! Corinth! Ephesus! Antioch! Jerusalem! What opportunities they offered, but they could not all be visited. He had, of course, known that, and so for centuries, a thousand years and more, He had been training one nation to be, as it were, the seed-plot from which all the sowing would proceed. This Jewish race were in a very real sense His own, and so to them He came, and to their spiritual education He devoted Himself. He knew its difficulties, was sure they would repel Him and crucify Him, but He knew also that the good seed sown would not all be wasted. For the nation, though small and rebellious, had shown wonderful capacity for producing saints. Kings like Hezekiah and Josiah; prophets like Hosea, Isaiah, and Ezekiel; statesmen like Moses, Samuel, and Nehemiah; women like Miriam and Deborah; philosophers like the authors

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of Job and Ecclesiastes ; heroes like Gideon and Jephthah ; were illustrious examples of the power of God, and the like would occur again. The time was ripe and the harvest would be plenteous, of that He was assured.

Now you must look upon your sphere of work as not only one to which you are called, but one that is prepared for you. You must remember that you are not the first to work there. There have been saints, men and women, who have "served the counsel of God in their generation," and been a blessing to those amongst whom they lived. You take up their work, and the past will give hope for the future. There ought to be no difficulty in finding their names and learning of their lives. Every church has a record of a few of them ; some in stone over the altar, some in shining colours in the windows, some in brasses—your church will have them. The trouble is there are not enough of them, and the dates of them are, for the most part, confined to the early centuries. Our saints ought to be brought up to date. The walls and pillars ought to be covered with little memorials, like our war memorials, testifying to the fact of the power of God. So, too, our Kalendars ought to be filled with modern as well as mediæval and ancient saints, showing that God still works, and amongst all classes. There are shoemakers like Carey,

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as well as princes like Alfred, humble sewing women like Sarah Martin, as well as queens like Margaret, poets like John Keble and scholars like Brooke Foss Westcott, tinkers like John Bunyan and fine gentlemen like Nicholas Ferrar, they all contribute to the moral wealth of the Church. That, indeed, is the value of Saints' days, to put before our people what they may become, what God intended that they should become. For these good people were all men of like passions as we are, and it is our business to help the Church in producing them. "Called to be Saints" describes the vocation of every man, and though many refuse the call, yet the Saints are a great host that no man can number. Archbishop Benson, when Bishop of Truro, used to take special pains in reminding the congregations of the little villages, in that land of Saints, which he visited, of the lives and deeds, so far as they were known, of those first preachers in Cornwall. Remember, then, that your garden has been worked over and over again, and is now calling for further help. See that you give yourself to it, and that you add before you leave to that imperishable record in which are written the names of those inscribed in the Book of Life

But when you have realised the interesting moral history of your parish, what is to be your method, with the one thousand or five thousand

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souls committed to your care? How are you to proceed? Of course, if your object is to fill the church, then you will follow the way of the world and advertise the kind of things that will be most attractive to the many. You will endeavour to be popular, to meet the whims and fancies of the most of your people. You will say the deeper and more abiding truths must wait a little. "First, I must know and be known by all, and then, perhaps, selection may be necessary." Your plans succeed, your church is much sought after, the music is excellent, and your sermons much admired, and yet you sometimes wonder whether you are quite satisfied. But it is now difficult to alter, the congregation has made your standard not you theirs, and they expect you to keep to it. To take another line now will produce restlessness and perhaps empty places. Perhaps it might be well to leave and begin again elsewhere. But what do you leave? That is the trouble. Somehow you have missed the main object. The method has been wrong? Well, let us see what He did?

I. HE SEEKS OUT THOSE WHOM GOD GAVE HIM.—He does not aim at being attractive and popular at gathering round Him troops of followers. On the contrary, He tries to get together the few who would respond to His teaching and share His aims. These were not easy to find. The Jewish

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Church on the whole was bad, its priests and scholars, for the most part, bigoted and self-sufficient, its officials ignorant and worldly. They would never make disciples. He must turn to the needy, those who felt the want of God and the impossibility of finding a way to peace without Him. And of these there were three different classes.

- (1) The simple-minded, who were free from the perplexities of wealth, position, intellectual pride, men who knew their sinfulness and God's Holiness, and eagerly sought a Teacher who would make Him known.
- (2) The sick, racked with pain or possessed by demons, compassed with infirmity or burdened with sorrow, they seemed forsaken of God and left in the hands of His enemies. Would no one care and no one relieve? They too needed a helper.
- (3) Besides these there were the outcasts, those who had sought in wine or lust the satisfaction of their desires, even at the expense of their respectability, and now found it all dust and ashes. They were reckless, dissipated, licentious, but beneath their debauchery there was a hunger for One who would set them right.

So to the amazement of the world that never

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tired of complaining of the strange company He sought, He turned to these, the simple, the infirm and outcast people, to find the material with which He would build His Church.

(1) *The Simple*.—He went strangely enough but little to Judæa, the home of the most cultivated and educated spirits of the nation, and probably not at all to the Schools of Hillel and Shammai, but mainly to Galilee, where simplicity could still be found. And first to the place where a great religious revival was taking place, for here many were being converted by the greatest mission preacher of his or any time, John the Baptist. He went there not as an onlooker, but as a participator, as One Who in spite of His sinlessness would have share in it. Men should see that in this stirring spiritual movement He was vitally interested. And then after His baptism He waited and prayed. As He prayed before setting His disciples apart, so now He, doubtless, prayed that the right men might be given Him. And so they were. That is important for us to remember. More than once He emphasises this fact that His disciples were given Him. “Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me out of the world. I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me.” And He chose them on that sole

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ground, that they were His Father's gift, not because they were interesting, sympathetic, gifted, attractive to the world, but simple-natured, as God's children would be.

Some sought Him out, such as Andrew and John, Peter and Nathanael. Others He recognised at once, as Philip, and Matthew whom He called. Others were made known to Him in some secret way. He was on the look out for that sign, which His own intuition perceived was His Father's commendation. And so began that first little company through which the world was to be turned upside down. This, too, must be our first business. There must, of course, be a general visiting of our people, we must be acquainted with the members of our congregation, our communicants, Sunday School teachers and so forth, but our main duty must be to get to know those whom God has given us for our work. And it is quite likely that we shall find them as He did in unaccustomed places, not where our predecessors have found them, in the well-known beats of Church work, but in some quiet, secret meeting where a few simple people are gathered together for prayer, or, perhaps, at a Quiet Day or parochial Retreat where the needy and hungry go to get help for their souls. They know God a little and are anxious to know Him better. They

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are those who, as Bishop Wilkinson used to say, were already at the centre. I remember well that before going to my first parish, which was in New Zealand, when I asked him for advice as to what I should put first—his answer was clear. “Don’t work at the circumference, but at the centre: don’t seek out the many, but the one: pray God that He send you one faithful man whose heart He has touched, and through him others will be given.” Looking back on my experience in those far-off days, I can only express my regret that though I never forgot it I was never wholly faithful to it. I had my body of workers, and very grateful I am for their help and service, but my choice was constantly being biassed by the position, the talents, the popularity of the candidates. Some were just what was needed, simple-hearted, earnest people, for whom nothing was too hard, nothing too humble; others were disappointing.

But, again, it is well to remember that probably four, if not more, of our Lord’s disciples belonged to the circle of John the Baptist. And they—such men as Andrew, Peter, John—became His closest friends and His best workers. Their preparation under the stern Baptist was a wholesome discipline. But whilst saying this we must remember many of John’s disciples would not leave him.

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They preferred his ways to those of Christ, his prayers and asceticism to our Lord's more free and open methods. So, too, while we may naturally expect some of those who have been our predecessors' best workers to rally round us, we must not mind if we find some earnest, faithful workers sticking to the old ways, preferring the homeliness of the old bottles, and rather afraid of the new wine that may burst them. Our Lord was always very tender to the sensitiveness of such. Even the Baptist was not able to see eye to eye with Him, was a little disappointed with the way in which things were going; but so far from resenting this lack of vision, our Lord praised him openly before the people. "Verily I say unto you, among those that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." It is well to bear this in mind when we are disposed to criticise our predecessor. We may not think he sees as far as we do, but it is he and his workers who have made much that we hope to do possible.

(2) *The Outcast*.—But the religious and simple were not the only class of people from whom Christ selected helpers. He spent a large part of His time amongst the publicans and sinners, so much so that He was looked upon specially as their Friend. And out of them He found men like Matthew the

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publican, and women like Mary Magdalene. They were amongst the lost. But by "the lost" we do not mean simply or mainly the immoral, the drunkards and fallen, but all those who are not yet found, those who have not yet known God as their Friend or Jesus as their Saviour. They are lost because not yet found. There is a far larger number of these than we suppose. Such a book as *The Army and Religion* shows plainly enough that by far the greater proportion of our soldiers and officers had no knowledge of what the Apostolic Christians called "The Way." They had got off the road of faith and were lost. They were in doubt as to whether life ended anywhere. Now, it is our duty to show them where it is. We do this by visiting, by letters, and above all by innumerable personal kindnesses. Visiting can hardly be overpraised. Nothing can take its place. Preaching, as I shall hope to show, is of great importance, but compared with visiting it is as likely to be successful as trying to fill narrow-necked water-bottles by flinging bucketfuls over them: only one by one can people be helped. Our Lord's example shows this. He never found much satisfaction with the crowds that were attracted by His preaching, but was ever giving His attention to the one.

And what was His method? In one word

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it was "seeking." He sought them out as the shepherd searches for the lost sheep. He went into the streets of the poor where some were sure to be found, and into the houses of the great where others might be seen. And wherever He was He was strangely accessible, I mean, allowed a familiarity of approach which even we, with our knowledge of His ways, would feel to be questionable in any one else. Take that scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Our Lord is at meat with the great and exclusive. A poor woman out of the streets seeks Him out, enters the dining-room and "standing behind at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment." And He not only allowed it and welcomed it, but justified it to his host. Now this identification with the sinner seemed to the Pharisee quite scandalous, and only possible on the supposition that He did not know the real character of the woman. But it showed how accessible, really friendly and loving, He was to those who had got lost. Such became His devoted friends and, like the possessed Gadarene who had got back his freedom from Christ, wanted to be with Him all the time. But He bade them to go back to their friends and tell them how great

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things had been done for them. Such poor outcasts, whom society banished, were the chief objects of His regard. But there were others who, equally lost though moral and respectable, found in Him the same willingness to help. There is Nicodemus on the one hand, and the rich young man on the other. They were both off the road, both seeking their way back to God. And to both He shows great sympathy and affection. Their difficulties are really greater than those of the woman who was a sinner. With the one they were intellectual, the other moral. "This Kingdom of God—what does He mean by it?" so Nicodemus asked. "This eternal life, how is it to be reached?" so the rich young man asked. He dealt with both very plainly. The one got out of his darkness, and we would fain hope the other did too.

So He went forth, day by day, ever seeking and ever finding, realising continually the joy which the angels know when the lost is found. Now this is the work to which we are pledged, namely, "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." But pledged though we are we don't like it. It is, perhaps, the least well done of all our duties, the one for which we find most excuses, the one most men like least.

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The late Bishop of Liverpool, Dr Chavasse, in pressing this duty upon his clergy would urge upon them the duty of being out of the house by 2 P.M. If they dallied or dawdled the afternoon would be lost.

But how are we to reach them?

(a) *By Fellowship.*—They must be persuaded that we are not out for any selfish advantage, that we really care for them. By being yourself, your best self, you gradually awaken their trust. They are not perfectly happy, no one who is not in conscious touch with God can be, and secretly they envy your brightness and good humour. Where do you get it from? They wouldn't change lives with you—yours seems to them a dull profession, but they would like to have your spirit. Then one day over the fire in the late evening it all comes out. First, discontent with religion as they know it, so pretentious and unreal, and then dissatisfaction with themselves; then the wonder whether after all there is a God and He has any relation to them, followed by the invitation to come again. Little by little the story is told, and the cloud is seen which hides God. Then the Way of Peace is explained, and the soul, seeking absolution in the appointed way, is freed and knows the joy of being found and loved.

(b) *By Witness.*—Friendliness must be followed by boldness. There is a danger lest

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in our friendliness we should forget our mission. We are friends for Christ's sake as well as our people's. Some men think they get more quickly at men's hearts if they wear a coloured tie, a white hat and a Norfolk jacket, and are generally seen with a pipe in their mouth. Nobody will then suspect them of being priests with an ulterior design. It is true they get more quickly into conversation about the latest bit of interest in the sporting world, but having got there it is not any easier, but really rather harder, to get further. The dress seems to say, "I am as you are," but the burdened soul wants one who is the same but different. "I would rather have so and so," said a sporting man of the world, of a parson with whom he was speedily on easy terms, "as my friend than as my chaplain." The question is, "Can we speak freely of Jesus Christ without cant or affectation, and without that lack of reverence and awe which necessarily belongs to our thought of One Who is God?" There must, of course, be no suspicion that we are talking for duty's sake, no thought that we are speaking outside our own experience. It must always be, "We speak that we do know, and testify what we have seen." There must be wisdom and understanding, and above all, endless variety in our method of approach. We are promised help. The words, "Thou shalt catch men," is given through St Peter

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to us all. And in His example we find abundant illustrations of the way in which He endeavoured to arrest the attention of the worldly and sinful. When He is trying to win over his host, Simon the Pharisee, He uses a story; to Pilate, something of a soldier-philosopher, He suggests the greatness of Truth; the licentious Herod He meets with silence. Each man was met by that means which was most likely to win him. So we, too, must watch our time, get to know those whom we seek to influence, learn their dispositions, and, above all things, pray for that spiritual discernment which will prevent our making mistakes, and enable us to say that which will be of most service. Of the power of prayer in this connection, the following story of the late Bishop of Chelmsford is a good illustration. He was visiting a woman who was living anything but a Christian life, simply standing on her conversion twenty years ago. He had prayed about it before he went to see her, and was led to say, "I am surprised to see you washing, for you washed those clothes only a month ago." She laughingly replied, "Well, if I didn't keep washing them they wouldn't be fit to wear." And at once the Bishop replied, "Then what must your heart be if it is twenty years since it was washed." She stopped her washing and then knelt down by the side of the tub, and there

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that afternoon the cry went up, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

(c) *By Letters*.—Let me before leaving this part of our subject lay stress on the importance of letters. The New Testament, existing as it does largely of letters, suggests their importance. Now, in the cultivation of friendliness, which is essential if we are to win confidence, and without it our work is vain, we can do much by letters. It is strange that so valuable a means should be so little used. A letter by the post is always prized, it increases many a man's self-respect and the regard of his neighbours. That the postman should stop at his door and hand in a letter gives distinction to the house. And the opportunities are so many. The dates of birthdays and weddings are days when the heart is warm with pleasant memories. The Rector's letter is prized as a godsend. So, too, the days of sorrow, when the child died, when the lad left his home, when the father is out of work. A cheering word then will never be forgotten. Amongst the treasures hidden away in the little old desk lies our letter, too sacred to be destroyed. Only the other day a worker sent me a letter that I wrote some thirty years ago, begging that it might be returned. There was nothing very interesting in it, it was as commonplace as many letters usually are, and yet it was prized. And one advantage of the letter over the conversation

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is that we can say more, let ourselves go more freely. And if you are ever at a loss to know how to persuade a man to a difficult duty by letter, read over again St Paul's letter to Philemon, and catch its fine spirit of charity and wisdom.

(3) *The Sick*.—The simple and the lost occupied large parts of His time, but perhaps He spent most with the sick, the crippled, and the possessed. He was the great Healer, even more than the great Teacher. As the writer of *Ecce Homo* says, "He might have left to all subsequent ages more instruction if He had bestowed less time upon diminishing slightly the mass of evil around Him, and lengthening by a span the short lives of the generation in the midst of which He lived. The whole amount of good done by such works of charity could not be great compared with Christ's power of doing good; and if they were intended, as is often supposed, merely as attestations of His divine mission, a few acts of the kind would have served the purpose as well as many. Yet we may say they were the great work of His life. His biography may be summed up in the words, He went about doing good. His wise words were secondary to His beneficial deeds; the latter were not introductory to the former, but the former grew occasionally, and as it were, accidentally, out of the latter. He came

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as He said, not only to give men life but to give it in abundance." Consequently, wherever in the towns or villages He found men suffering from want of it, He supplied it. There were those who were laid aside by ordinary illnesses, and there were exceptional cases, "lepers, repellent, disfigured, horrible lepers; epileptics who writhed in the dust, their faces twisted in a set spasm, the froth on their lips; the possessed of devils, who prowled among the ruined tombs, evil dogs of the night, disconsolate; paralytics, trunks which have just enough feeling to suffer, dead bodies inhabited by an imprisoned and suppliant soul." Of these it would seem as though the possessed were the most numerous. But it was His mission, as St John writes, to cast out devils. "He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil."

Now, perhaps, there is no contrast more marked between the Christ of History and the Christ of His Mystical Body the Church, than that which His Ministry of Healing suggests. In Galilee, the miraculous cures made a far greater impression on the public mind than anything else. They were, no doubt, mainly responsible for the immense crowds that attended Him wherever He went. They confirmed His Word, they explained His Mission. And when doubts were expressed by the Baptist as to whether

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He really was what He claimed to be, it was mainly to the ministry of healing that He drew the doubters' attention. But to-day, how different. Miracles claimed at Lourdes! wonderful works in healing missions; but these are only ripples on the calm life of the Church. It may be said that the time for such signs has passed by, and yet no age pays more attention to outward signs than our own. Or, it has been said, that the gift of the Spirit renders the confirming power of healing unnecessary. But our Lord, so far as we can see, anticipated no such cessation of wonderful cures. He not only commissioned His disciples to work miracles, but promised even greater results than they had known during His lifetime.

A question then arises as to whether the Church has not been guilty of lack of faith in confining her expectation of healing signs to the work of the medical profession; whether she must not look outside those limitations, whether, without trenching on the natural field which medicine and surgery have made their own, she ought not to do two things: Through the excitation of faith, and the service of prayer and unction, to make possible a much larger number of cures than we see to-day; and through faith and the outward use of her own means to diminish that large number of cases judged

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incurable by the medical profession. There can be no doubt that His works of healing helped many people who had misunderstood Him, to believe in Him. They saw their relatives and friends delivered out of their pains and terrible obsessions, and praised God for His mercy; and the patients themselves were the best expression of His love. The doctor who heals us freely without taking any reward is necessarily our friend. We are grateful to him and become devoted to him, so there must have been hundreds drawn to our Lord because of His personal goodness to them. He had made them well, given them freedom, lengthened their days. So they learned to love Him.

Now, must we not follow along the same path and use the opportunities of sickness which God gives us for His Glory, not merely that the patients may be comforted in their affliction but that they may learn by faith the presence and work of the great Healer of mankind, Jesus Christ. We must go, as He did, with expectation and with power, remembering the promise, "Ye shall do greater works because I go to the Father." I am premising that in most cases we are more or less acquainted with the family whom we are summoned to attend. Generally the opportunity comes a little late, as the messages are often sent when the

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patient's life is almost despaired of. The reason for this is that the clergyman is not supposed to bring any advantage to the body but only to the soul. This we must correct. We must get our people to recognise two things:—That God has in His mercy given to the Church, through the medical profession, wonderful knowledge in healing and restoration to health. Could St Luke witness a modern operation he would probably say that nothing in his experience was more marvellous than what he saw. The anaesthetic deadening all pain, the amazing skill of the surgeon, the remarkable power of antiseptics, the care and sympathy of the nurses and all in attendance, would make him kneel down and thank God for the wonderful development of his art, and for the extraordinary helps and gifts He has given to meet the difficulties and needs of the faculty. They would be proofs as valid as any miracles he witnessed that Christ still healed through His Body the Church.

But though deeply impressed by this aspect of modern healing he would, no doubt, be pained that there was so little open recognition of Christ's presence throughout the operation or the illness. He would see that the attention and the hope were fixed on the doctor, that only when he confessed that

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he was at the end of his power, only then was there a real turning to God. And even then there was a paralysing spirit of fatalism. The patient was either for death or for life. His time had come or it had not come, and neither prayer nor sacrament could alter the Divine decree.

It is here that our ministry will be most valuable. Setting out with the conviction that God wills health and not sickness, a fact witnessed by the endeavour nature makes to overcome disease, that Christ is still amongst us in the Church which is His Body, healing and teaching as He did two thousand years ago, that now as then He always seeks the health of the whole man, and not of a part (nine lepers were made well in body but only one man made whole), we go with expectation and faith to the sick room. We realise that the doctor has done all that can be done for the body, but we know that if his treatment is to be effective something more must be done, the man's faith must be awakened to the presence and work of the Unseen Physician. The pulse is low and the temperature is high because of doubt. This doubt must be dispelled. It may be due to a sense of sin which makes the patient feel that the Divine Healer can have no interest in him, is indeed separated from him. If that is so he must be moved

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to make a special confession of sin, and to feel through the absolution the joy of pardon. Or it may be due to the fact that he is making no proper use of his life. Why should God heal him if he is going to live as selfishly in the future as in the past? He must be taught to rededicate his life to God. Or there may be other particular causes. Well, whatever they may be, they must be discovered and dealt with, that he may see his life as God sees it. These cleared away you can promise Divine healing. You can then use the laying on of hands or unction (the latter as making a greater impression is perhaps preferable), saying words which suggest the presence and active ministry of Christ, and give as much assurance of Divine power working through unction as we believe it does through the laying on of hands in the Confirmation, or through the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. In these cases we don't say if it be God's will—because we know it is God's will, and here, too, we know that healing is God's will. But we don't know how it will manifest itself. With the aged it may mean a delicious sense of peace and quiet; with the dying it may mean the interposition of new forces arresting the on-coming of death, or the blessed freedom from pain or darkness; with ordinary patients it may mean a sudden accession of quickening to all

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the recuperative powers. But it always means something when the means are used in faith and are not met by sin or a rebellious, obstinate will. It must be always remembered that in some atmospheres our Lord can do nothing. In that of Nazareth—and it is to be feared that some sick rooms of to-day are thick with its stifling doubt—He could do no mighty works. Neither laying on of hands nor unction work as a charm. They have no power apart from faith.

All this makes the visitation of the sick difficult though very important. We go with the double commission to loose and to bind. The alternatives are inevitable. Our ministry is a savour of life unto life or of death unto death. We may wish it were otherwise, but we cannot help ourselves. Where there is faith the loosing power over body and soul is evident; where there is unbelief the binding power makes itself felt in a horrible, fatalistic paralysis in which prayer becomes almost impossible.

It means, therefore, that there should be very careful preparation. As the Dean of Chester writes in his book *M. Couë and his Gospel of Health* :—“ Unless we can find time for quiet and meditation and prayer we cannot hope to wield spiritual power. We may wield much else but not spiritual power. Of this quiet, meditation and prayer are the

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absolute conditions, and if we are really to help sick folk we must take infinite pains, quite as much pains as the doctor takes in handling his case from a different point of view. Healing is no soft job, about it there is no easy magic. If on the day we are going to visit our sick we make our own communion with our sick folk one by one in our mind ; if we will ask the Great Physician to walk in our feet to the house and to talk with our tongue and love with our heart, when we get there ; if we go there with the humble and yet hopeful expectancy and confidence that can only be ours, because they aren't ours but His, we shall do much good. We need have no fear lest, if we pray for the patient's physical betterment and betterment doesn't result, the patient's faith will be too severely tried. He will always get something, and something that more than compensates him for any disappointment. Few priests can have visited more sick people than I have —unless they be chaplains of hospitals or infirmaries — during the last five-and-twenty years, and of faith failure, through too direct and confident praying for bodily health, I have never known an instance."

That witness many would confirm. The Divine power is always at work in response to faith, of that we are certain, but we cannot tell the direction, whether to mind, body,

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spirit, or to all three. We know that in Apostolic days the greatest of the apostles was not cured of his sharp, devastating pain, though in St Luke he had a physician full of faith and the Holy Ghost. But though not healed in body he was in mind. He found by experience such help in this trying limitation that he gloried in it. There are, no doubt, cases where God's glory is better served by weakness rather than strength, by illness rather than health. A friend of mine writes of one who only discovered God's love after sight and hearing were lost. Illness gives a man time to think, and is often a sacrament. We remember how Jesus took a deaf and dumb man aside and taught him both to hear and speak, so He helps the sick both to understand His message and to pray. Bishop Walsham How tells us of one who was very ill to whom the priest said, "And now, my friend, what can I do for you?" "I want you to pray for me." "I will most gladly, but what shall I pray for?" "Oh, sir, you know best." "No, you must know best what you want, and if you will tell me I will ask for it." The man still insisted that the priest would know what to pray for. At last the priest said, "Well, I am to see another sick person, and I will go on there now and come back to you, and when I come back perhaps you will have found out what

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you would like me to pray for." He came back in half an hour, and the sick man said, "Oh, sir, I have been a great sinner. I want you to ask God to forgive me." So he gained a greater gift than bodily health—the conversion of his soul. Sometimes we emphasise one side of our ministry, sometimes another. The unction of the sick looks specially to the restoration of body, the Holy Communion to the restoration of soul. Both effects may be sudden or gradual, but both are Divine instruments. If we cared to distinguish we might say that in the one case the man's personality is reached through the joy of bodily health, in the other through the joy of spiritual sacrifice. In the relief from pain he adores the Divine Healer, in the relief from self-centredness he adores the Divine Lover. It is a great thing to feel well again, but a greater to feel eager for sacrifice. Holy Communion emphasises this.

In our Scottish Office the primitive practice of Reservation has been the rule for a great number of years. It has great advantages, especially during the Festival Seasons, as it enables so many to receive within the Octave. When the Sacred Elements are taken to the sick, as they were in the first days immediately after the service in the Church, it gives a sense of

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fellowship with the whole Church which the patient feels to be of great value. But it labours under the same disadvantage that the administration of the sacred gifts does in the Roman Church, when it is separated from the Offering of the Sacrifice—the central feature of the rite; then the Consecration and Oblation are necessarily omitted, the main thought being that of reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord. Now Reception and Sacrifice God hath joined together, in one Rite, and in illness the thought of the redemption of the world through sacrifice is most uplifting. There is also much to be said for the blessing to the whole house, especially those of the very poor, when the simple table is made the Altar and the cottage becomes a Temple for the Celebration of the Mysteries. Clergy will be always tempted to use the shorter and more expeditious opportunity of the Reserved Sacrament, and it is right that this liberty should be secured to them, but those who have known the privilege and blessing of celebrating within the home will be moved to adopt both means, only using the Reserved Sacrament where necessary. When the patient sees Christ upon the Cross suffering pain for the life of the world, and bidding all His children rise up and do the same in remembrance of Him, he gets at least a glimpse of what bearing pain may do,

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and some sense of what is understood by "filling up by his suffering" that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ. Pain may be a great redeemer, He may effect more by it than by health. So the Sacrament of Communion with a sacrificed and sacrificing Lord may mean more than the Sacrament of the Unction of the Body.

One closing word as to our visits to the sick in the hour of death. If conventionality is ever obtrusive, it is here that it is most out of place. If ever want of respect to the feelings of others is deplorable, it is here disastrous. We must work along the old paths, and yet be sensitive in every fibre of our being to the great solemnity that shrouds the chamber of death. Comfort to the dying, and sympathy with those who, it may be, are losing all, need no emphasis. The first demands the words that have been long familiar—psalms, hymns, ejaculations. Walsingham How's *Pastor in Parochia* is very suggestive. But I need hardly say we should be without book on such an occasion. The second calls for that attitude of hope, that simple expression of absolute faith in the Resurrection which may mark the transitory character of death and lay stress on reunion in the glorious life to come. But all should be governed by a sense of human helplessness and reliance upon the Power and Love of

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God. Death is too much involved in sin to be otherwise than a dark and terrible mystery. Even the Lord of Death Himself groaned when He faced it at the grave of Lazarus, though He knew that in less than an hour they would all be rejoicing in the restoration of the brother to his home. Again it troubled Him sorely when He faced it in the garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross. It is natural that we should shrink from it, but there are no visits that are more fruitful, both for ourselves and our relations with others. The relatives never forget that scene nor the part we played in it, and our sympathy then and in the days that follow up to the funeral will never be forgotten. We should do our best to break down the tyranny of custom which prevents the mourners, in some places, from attending the Celebration that follows on the succeeding Sunday if it falls before the funeral, so that they may realise as perhaps never before the Communion of Saints. And expensive funerals, which lead to such difficulties afterwards, should be discouraged. It is not difficult to make arrangements with a church undertaker to provide what is gravely and beautifully harmonious with our Christian faith, without the parade of a hearse that is both costly and hideous, and so to create a wholesome tradition. And this not only with regard to the obsequies, but with regard to

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the memorials that may be set up in the churchyard. We must remember that the objectionable glass memorials are largely due to the neglect of the Church to meet a want at a time of great need when money is scarce. Surrounded as widows and widowers are with very serious difficulties in their efforts to adapt themselves to new and lonely conditions, they are unable, as their well-to-do neighbours are, to care for the graves that cover all that is dearest to them. And the glass memorial is a tribute, expensive indeed to them, but lasting, which they can at once pay. What is wanted is a suggestion that a wooden or iron Cross, beautiful in design, will be less costly and much more satisfying to the Christian conscience, and that the Church will care for the whole of God's Acre, not only the graves of the rich. And it would be well to revive the custom of visiting the graves with flowers on Easter Eve and All Saints' Day to keep ever fresh our confidence in the Fellowship of the Saints, and to teach our people to hold frequent communion with their departed friends by prayer. For though on earth we concentrate on the individual, though we do all we know how to bring him to that perfection which God intended he should attain, we recognise that when we bid him go forth into the larger and fuller life, it is to a Society, to the Church of the

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Firstborn, that he is ushered. He leaves the Church that is struggling in the darkness to gain the fuller light that shines in the great Church of the Redeemed. He is not, in Keble's words, lost in the ocean of God's Love, but found in the Paradise of God's garden; not immersed in the fulness of God, but irremovably placed in the Temple of Christ, in that particular niche which has been waiting for him; not taken by the Divine Gardener to some little shelter from the rough winds of earth, but transplanted into a garden which wants him, in order that the full harmony of its glorious colour may be attained. All our work, our countless visits, our talks, ministrations, always had this in view; and in this the last visit, this blue patch in the clouds that darken must be clearly seen by all, otherwise they will find it hard to thank God that He has delivered their brother out of the miseries of this sinful world, in order that he may pass on to that perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in God's eternal and everlasting glory.

II. HE TRAINS THOSE HE FINDS.—We have thought of the joy the priest has in finding, but this is exceeded by the joy he experiences in using. "Saved to serve" ought to be the motto of every Church. So everyone you find must be trained for service. This, of course, differs very widely. I have not in

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mind the training church workers get in a college or hostel, but just that disposition which the disciples caught from being with our Lord, the readiness to help, the consideration and tact in doing it wisely, the unselfishness which sticks at nothing and goes on with it to the very uttermost. I have no time to speak of the need of it. The Christian Church is what it is to-day, poor, feeble, and ineffective, because there are so few, comparatively, who are ready to make its business known. And sometimes this is due to the priest himself. There are some who say, "I can't be bothered with holy men and women. They are more trouble than they are worth. I get through my work twice as quickly without them, and I excite no jealousies as I have no favourites." This is either the language of the autocrat who will share no part of his administration with curate or church-worker, or that of the shy, retiring man who hates to trouble other people. But all such inclinations to keep everything in your own hands must be resolutely set aside. In the first place, you must make up your mind at the outset that your own personality will only influence a comparatively small circle of people, that some you cannot help till others have paved the way for you. In the second place, isolation is the worst possible thing for your own character. Interesting as your angles

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are in giving it shape, they are unnecessarily sharp and need the chisel of human experience if you are to be what God wants you to be. And thirdly, the days of absolute government are over. Remember that by associating with the best in your congregation you quadruple your strength, and get credit and reputation for your administration. Average men, as most of us are, can not do much alone, but with others we may do exceedingly well. The late President of the United States has been described as an average man. "Main Street has arrived in the White House," is the way in which the papers described his advent from an ordinary business profession to that of President. And yet out of this average mind and character has been formed, so it is said, the strongest Cabinet Washington has seen in a generation. And how? Because he was determined that his decisions should rest upon the broad base of more than one intelligence, and therefore surrounded himself with able associates. "His policies," we are told, "lacked imagination, which is not a composite product, but they had practicality, which is the greatest common denominator of great minds." Contrast the late President Harding, unimaginative and practical, just a man of affairs, with Ex-President Wilson, quite outstanding, as a scholar, full of ideas and able to clothe them in graceful and forcible language.

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Is there any doubt as to who will effect most? And again why? Because the former delighted in sharing his judgments with others, whilst the latter stood aloof and worked alone. You will be wise, then, in forming a council of those whom you have found and feel able to use.

III. HE CALLS FOR SACRIFICE.—But you will not urge them to this great work of helping others on the ground that they will find it easy. When some of those who were attracted to Christ wished to join His company and do His service, He never drew them on by flattering speeches or splendid prospects. To one He seems to say, “Can you face the discomfort of it? Remember the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” To another who urged the necessity of first going home and attending the funeral of his father He curtly said, “Let the dead bury their own dead.” Whilst to another who wished first to bid farewell to his family He said, “He that hath put his hand to the plough and looketh back is not fit for the Kingdom.” Service meant the readiness to sacrifice home comforts, cherished traditions, and family ties, in fact everything. “If any man come to Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come

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after Me, cannot be My disciple." We all know that in our anxiety to secure workers we are accustomed to take another line: "It won't mean much time," we say, "perhaps an hour a week, and you could always do it after lunch when there is not much else to do. I know you can't give up an evening, but I don't ask that. Yes, home ties must come first. If it takes too much out of you, of course, you must give it up." This line is, however, a mistake, for the easy way does not attract those we want. After the fall of Rome, June 1849, when Garibaldi's fortunes were at their lowest, you will remember in what severe, self-sacrificing terms he called for followers. "Fortune who betrays us to-day will smile on us to-morrow. I am going out from Rome. Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger come with me. I offer neither pay nor quarters nor provisions. I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart and not with his lips only follow me." These were the terms that won the loyalty and heroism of that splendid band of men, that made victory possible. But, of course, no words, however stirring, will awaken that spirit unless they come from one whose life gives them backing. For more than a year Garibaldi had been a proved patriot and a leader in desperate

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situations. In contrast with him was the Pope, who seemed to share his aspiration which for a moment carried him away, but all that he could contribute "was a mild benevolence towards everybody," which at first deceived and then led to bitter disappointment. "Mild benevolence" will never find heroes, and unless by our life and devotion we show ourselves to be pledged to the work of redemption, the eager and devoted will leave us alone. Men must see that we are not hirelings out for a comfortable wage, but shepherds who are ready to give their lives for their sheep. As Bishop Gott, in his book *The Parish Priest in the Town*, rightly says, "The self-sacrifice of the active Christian is only an attraction, never a deterrent, you need not water it down or assure your would-be church-workers that the work is easy and the difficulty slight. The only helpers this will give you will be a limp and sorry crowd, like Falstaff's recruits. God's orders to Gideon in his selection of his first army was an inspiration for all time. 'Whosoever is fearful and afraid let him return and depart early.' Lay this to heart as a principle of your work in this and other matters. True men and women love trouble. They believe in difficulty for it calls out their God-given qualities, commends them to the Almighty. In work they know they increase their talents by use,

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and in the armies of heaven the post of danger is the post of honour."

IV. HE MAKES FRIENDS WITH THEM.— And now one last brief word on the principle of His training. This is made clear in the purpose laid down for the appointment of the Twelve. It is brief and to the point. "He appointed the Twelve that they might be with Him." Think of the difficulty He thus imposed on Himself. He had no means to provide for their necessities, no home where He could lodge them, and no rich friends who could give them what they lacked. They would be absolutely dependent on Him, and would give Him much trouble. And yet this great and daily responsibility for providing for twelve hungry men He willingly embraced that "they might be with Him." For it was this daily association that He knew would change their lives and make them what they afterwards became. Now it is not possible for many priests, if any, to have their inner circle of workers in such close touch with them as those who not only slept with Him under such covering as they could get from day to day, but also had their meals with Him and all their time with Him. To be alone He was obliged to get away early in the morning, before they were

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up. But constant association with our fellow-helpers, in spite of its difficulties, drawbacks, and loss of privacy, must be faced, and it is in some places being done. I know one London Rector who has his chief workers daily for lunch and for tea, and who provides them with a workroom attached to his own house. Of course, this outer fellowship would have but little value if it were not permeated by a spirit of friendliness. This was, I need hardly say, characteristic of our Lord's relations with the Twelve. "I do not call you servants," He says, "because a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends because all that I have heard from the Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 14, 15). And *they* were working-men, fishermen, tax-gatherers, and the like. It is as though a Rector were to say to his inner circle:—"I don't call you workers because a worker does not know what his rector has in mind, but I have called you friends because there is not a single plan for the good of the parish which I have ever concealed from you—you know all my mind."

It is this full confidence, this putting aside of all reserve, this delight in frankly sharing all the problems, plans, and ideas of the parish, that makes the work go so

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well. It means criticism, even the disciples ventured at times to criticise their Master, and it may mean with us, fallible as we are, the postponement of purposes, their revision and possible alteration, but it means unity and loyalty on the staff and without that it is hopeless to look for unity elsewhere.

I say nothing here of the broader fellowship, the Parochial Council, which answers to the Seventy whom our Lord used. This group, larger than that of the Twelve, and less intimate, which from its number indicated an official body whose duty it was to prepare the way for Him, to get to know the likely people in the cities and villages where He intended to go, He used to introduce the great subject of His Gospel so that they might be ready for it, and to seek out the sick. They were to be the spiritual counterpart of the seventy elders that helped Moses with the burden of administration. So, too, our Parochial Councils, consisting as they do of Communicants, ought to fulfil a wider ministry than our workers. There is a disposition in some quarters to belittle this body as though the Council were intended to be a check on the liberty of the priest. It may at times impose delay, but is always valuable as expressing the mind of the parish. To live in ignorance of this is to invite discontent and division.

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It is well to remember that they are all members of the Great Head and all drink of the same Cup. We ought therefore to be one with another. They will also do a great deal of business, such as the relief of the poor, the care of the fabric, the provision of funds for the various needs of the Church as they arise. And such a body gives an opportunity of Service to those who are unable to help in teaching or evangelistic work. We must never forget that the ministry of the Church is varied. "God hath set some in the Church—first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues," and that its purpose is service. He (*i.e.* Christ) gave these various offices in the Church that the saints (her members) might be made perfect in the work of ministering, in the task of building up the body of Christ. There is much to be done along this path, for large numbers of our Communicants are practically idle so far as the Kingdom of God is concerned. They do nothing for her except give a few shillings a year to meet her necessities. And this in spite of our Lord's teaching, which lays so much responsibility on each one fulfilling His ministry. All those waiting to be confirmed ought to be taught, before they receive the laying on of hands, what their spiritual gift is and how they may best exercise it.

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V. THE JOY OF IT ALL.—And now, one closing word on the joy this work brings us. We have said that this service to which you are called is the greatest in the world. And so it is, in this regard more than perhaps any other, that it not only makes good men and women, but offers a larger opportunity of friendships than that of any other. The navy and army are rich in the facilities they offer for comradeship, the wardroom and the mess are made for that purpose ; so, too, the law helps those on circuit to know and care for one another, but the range here is practically limited to one sex and one class. The Ministry of Christ embraces all mankind, and nothing is more delightful than the friendships priests have made with every section of their parishioners. It goes on from year to year with increasing force, and long after a man has passed away from the sphere of his labours, he rejoices in the constancy and affection of those who will never forget either him or his ministry. Their prayers, their letters, their greetings make his path warm with a sunshine on which, in spite of clouds, he can always rely. It is sublime to feel and say of another, "I need never meet or speak or write to him ; we need not reinforce ourselves or send tokens of remembrance. I rely on him as on myself ; if he did this or

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this I know it was right." This is the earthly reward Christ gives His servants, and we need ask for no better: "There is no man that hath left houses and brethren, or sisters or mother, or father or children, or lands, for My sake and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters and mother, and children and lands." Such is the experience of His friends. He not only gives us fellowship with Himself, the greatest boon earth can afford, but friendship with the best in all the earth.

## CHAPTER III

### The Unspeakable Privilege of Preaching

THE joy of finding brings with it, as we have seen, many valuable and sacred associations, and these often ripen into lifelong friendships which more than repay for all the trouble and sacrifice the work has involved. But this is only one side of our duty, though perhaps the most important. There is that other more prominent and public side which has so engrossed the attention of men that in some quarters it occupies not only the chief, but the whole place in their thoughts. Patrons and vestries, when nominating, will ask but one question, "What kind of a preacher is he?" as though nothing else mattered. Now, it is true that the preparation of sermons is a high duty, that the spiritual life of a parish will languish if it is not encouraged and edified by good preaching, but we must take "good" in a large sense as covering much more than eloquent, attractive, interesting, and the like. Some of the most effective sermons have been lacking in popular qualities, whilst others that stirred not a ripple of spiritual movement have not been without rhetorical artifice. Good preaching is the preaching of a good man—

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that is, of one who knows God and loves man. It may be defective in many of the necessary arts and graces of the able speaker, you may be obliged to get accustomed to a bad manner, a halting tongue, and inconvenient pauses before you can appreciate it, but it gets home every time, as you find by the silence of the congregation as it leaves the church, the best test of a really successful sermon. For, as one of the greatest of modern preachers, Phillips Brooks reminds us, "Preaching is truth through personality." "The truth must come," as he says, "really through the person, not merely over his lips, not merely into his understanding and out through his pen. It must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him. I think that, granting equal intelligence and study, here is the great difference which we feel between two preachers of the Word: The Gospel has come over one of them, and reaches us tinged and flavoured with his superficial characteristics, belittled with his littleness. The Gospel has come *through* the other, and we receive it impressed and winged with all the earnestness and strength that there is in him. In the first case the man has been but a printing-machine or a trumpet, in the other case he has been a true man and a real messenger of God."

Now this being the essential characteristic

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of preaching, provided that a man has any gift of expression, the opportunity must always be one of the great occasions of his life, a moment of extraordinary interest if not of real joy. The depreciatory way in which some priests speak of this privilege must be due either to mock modesty or a persuasion that they feel themselves all unworthy of that duty to which they were called, or to a failure to realise the promise of the Holy Spirit that He would always teach them what to say and how to say it. There is no cause, then, for that haunting, self-consciousness which is always a subtle form of pride. If preaching is the great opportunity for explaining the burning thoughts with which we have been busy through the week, and of sharing them with others, then provided there is the right relationship between us and the congregation, one of affection and cordial friendship, then, as George Herbert says, "The parson preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne." His joy, because he can now say what he has to say without let or hindrance; his throne, because the pulpit gives not only the authority of the great Catholic Church behind, but the assurance of the presence of Christ within him. Here then lies a privilege such as no other speaker enjoys; the audience is quiet, still, and expectant, already prepared by worship to contemplate the great truths of God, and the

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greatest of all subjects is his theme, and he has the power of the Holy Ghost to help him forward. If he lacks interest, persuasion, clearness and fire, it is because he has mis-judged the magnificence of the opportunity and the greatness of the powers entrusted to him. But how may he best fulfil this ministry? Happily there is no lack of the experience of others. The preachers of our own time, such as Boyd Carpenter, Bull, Phillips Brooks, Dale and others, have generously laid bare their experiences and given us largely of their wise counsels. For what I have to say I shall not go over the ground they have travelled, but, speaking of preaching under two aspects, evangelistic and expository, confine myself to emphasising such necessary conditions as (1) Urgency, (2) Sincerity, (3) Interest and Fulness, which merit more attention than they have received.

I. URGENCY.—And first of Urgency. I was recently at a meeting, consisting of Anglicans and leading Presbyterians of the Established and United Free Churches, when one who had won a world-wide fame amongst the Non-conformists of England, was asked to give his opinion on the preaching of to-day. No one was better qualified, for he himself was a distinguished preacher, and knew personally many of the best preachers of England and Wales. He said that he thought it lacking

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in spiritual power, both here and in America. He had not long since addressed a meeting of six hundred priests and ministers in San Francisco, and at the conclusion of his address the chairman said: "If you can do anything for us in America by sending us some one who will teach us how to preach, we shall be greatly indebted, for we cannot do it. We have lost the power of it!" "Lost the power of it!" It was a strange admission, partly due, no doubt, to the forcible address they had heard, partly to the desire for better things. But those present at our meeting were not prepared to say that had that judgment been passed on the Scottish preachers of to-day it would have been wrong. Everyone admitted that there were many interesting and illuminating preachers whose thought and expression were stimulating, but they were not awakening, not effective. The congregation passed out of church very much as they passed in, not in any way moved to be different from what they had been. The great awakening preachers, so they seemed to feel, were no longer to be found. And yet never was greater care taken in the theological colleges to prepare men for the work. What then was lacking? There was silence, for no one knew quite what to say. Then some one hazarded that it was the note of urgency that was missed, that it was hard to find preachers

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who felt their subject was a matter of life and death to their hearers. With this all agreed. It was generally felt that the men who in old days moved the masses, such as Edward Irving, Chalmers, Aitken, Body and Wilkinson, Spurgeon and Moody, to mention characteristically different types, were men who believed in hell as well as heaven, in darkness as well as light, in the terrors of solitude as well as the joys of fellowship. With them salvation was a tremendous reality. This had largely passed away. The modern preacher has no great anxiety about his people. The message given from the pulpit to-day is generally quiet and intelligent, full of ethical interest, but not urgent; it does not appear to matter very much whether what is being pressed is obeyed at once or not. There will, of course, be loss if men do not believe; it may be serious, but not the kind of loss pictured in the New Testament. The present moment is not critical. That is the tone of some of the very best.

There are no doubt many causes for this. The study of other religions has led to a widespread belief that while Christianity is certainly the best, yet it is only one of others, and that we must not be too exacting in pressing its claims as exclusive. So, too, the welcome preaching of the Fatherhood of God, apart from the other truths of the Gospel, has produced a general feeling

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that He is not only very kind, but also very indulgent to men's sins, which are rather weaknesses bringing with them their own punishments than offences against God's laws, and that it was dishonouring to God not to think that all will not be right in the end. Further, the natural reaction from a teaching about hell, which was degrading in its thoughts of God and Christ, from "views which represented God as doing that which the most heartless of human beings would not do," had led to what was felt to be a wise ignoring of the whole subject. We could not, then, to-day speak as our forefathers did, nor be as effective as they were. That was the general conclusion. And yet the note of urgency was so often struck, both in the Old and in the New Testament, that it was difficult to avoid feeling that it was a necessary element in the Gospel message, and that we might be missing just that factor which gave a reasonable ground for such amazing acts as those of the Incarnation, Atonement, and the Resurrection, as well as that spiritual power which makes for conversion. If men were really perishing, if the outlook of humanity were really so serious and grave as the Bible represents, then we can understand perfect Love undertaking anything and everything to save mankind. But if the race was slowly but surely evolving into perfect fulness of life by its own inherent power, then it is

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difficult to see why the Eternal should become Man and die upon the Cross.

But quite apart from reasoning, there can be no question that if our preaching is to be modelled after the example of the Prophets and Apostles, and after that of Christ Himself, it must have the note of urgency. I shall not trouble you with quotations from the Prophets, but pass at once to the New Testament. Here at the very outset we are face to face with it in the preaching of the Baptist. He openly proclaimed the times as being critical ; the axe was already at the root of the tree, and the tree without fruit would certainly be cut down and the chaff burnt in the fire. And so far from qualifying what His herald had said Christ asserted it again and again with increased emphasis, using many striking pictures to drive it home. The house crushing in upon its occupants, the horrible refuse pit burning with unquenchable fire, the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the dark prison, are all images of future judgment. Separation He declares to be certain and inevitable. There are the blessed, who go rejoicing into the Kingdom prepared for them ; there are the cursed, who go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels ; there are the wise who enter the marriage feast, and the foolish who are left outside crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us" ; there are the diligent and brave set in positions of influence, and there

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are the lazy and cowardly cast out into outer darkness. And repentance was the dividing line. One day some near Him drew His attention to Pilate's cruel massacre of the Galileans, expecting to excite His sympathy ; whilst, no doubt, He felt this, He surprised them by giving it a personal direction, " Do ye suppose that they were worse than others ? I tell you Nay ; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Or again, when someone drew His attention to the fall of the Tower of Siloam, which had crushed eighteen people in its ruins, He replied by saying that was a warning to all of the fate which should befall them unless they repented. It was ever thus. Behind the natural joyousness and hope of life which He encouraged, exhorting men to throw themselves without fear under the protecting care of His Father, there was the dark background of judgment, great thick clouds of impenetrable darkness certain to overwhelm the impenitent. Men must repent at once and quickly. No time was to be lost. Lot's wife was a warning of the danger of delay. And they must not shrink from any measures, however desperate they might seem, if only they could avoid the ultimate ruin to which unbelief led. He would say that it was far better that a man should pluck out his right eye, or cut off his right hand, than be cast into the pit where the worm dies not and the fire

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is not quenched ; far better to sacrifice your dearest possession than be lost. His disciples were so moved by this sterner aspect of His teaching, and of the little regard people paid to it, that they wondered whether any would be saved at all. "Who, then, can be saved ?" "Are there few that be saved ?" they would ask. And He would not answer directly, but rather reminded them that God's power was quite sufficient to carry them along the narrow and straight path that led to eternal life, if they would only shelter beneath His protection.

Much more might be said, but it is sufficient as marking the strong contrast between His preaching and that characteristic of our own time. He felt real anxiety about the condition of the men and women He met, and with whom He prayed. He sympathised with Humanity, loved it, wept over it, but never under-rated the seriousness or the danger to which it was exposed. As the Bishop of Pretoria writes :— "It is not to rely on any one text, nor to take too literally this or that bit of imagery as used by Christ, to say that He did not shrink from declaring the tremendousness of the consequences which attend upon the repudiation and the frustration of the love which He offered to men. . . . He saw men passing under judgment. He saw men coming to the light. He saw them, too, falling into the outer darkness. . . .

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That is the possibility which lends such fearful urgency to the tones of Christ's warnings. 'Choose now,' He says, 'or it may be that you will never choose.' It is the possibility of *final self-exclusion from the love of God.*'

And this urgency expressed so strongly and repeatedly by Christ was the burden of the Apostolic Gospel; St Peter with his "Save yourselves from this untoward generation"; St Paul with his "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which was spoken by the Prophets," or, "We entreat you that you receive not the Grace of God in vain. Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation"; St John with his Apocalyptic threatenings; all alike pressed home on their hearers the necessity of decision.

And it was their sense of judgment that gave them such power to persuade. "*Knowing the terror of the Lord,*" that is, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what He has done, whether it be good or bad, we persuade men, *i.e.* we do our very best to win them over to Christ, that in Him they may escape this danger. It was this that made the old Gospel of acceptance in Christ so powerful. It was not merely that it promised an extraordinary development of life and character through Christ, but that it freed the soul from the

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sense of loss which the gradual decay of the body was always impressing on it, and the fear of coming judgment with which sin burdened it. But this does not, of course, mean that Divine Judgment is to be the subject of every sermon, to be pressed home on every occasion. Our Church has its one special season of Advent for this. But rather that our preaching should have that note of pressing importance which those who feel that the world is on the eve of a crisis that will affect every one would naturally convey.

But with all this they must be reasonable, and show, as the old sermons sometimes failed to show, that the judgment is man's own doing. We have been taught by history again and again, as well as Scripture, that such judgments are not arbitrary, not out of relation to the story of our life, but (and this does not make the thought less terrifying) the natural working out of an inevitable law. Just as some through lack of eyesight, or hearing, or intelligence, or all three, find it impossible to understand this world right, so it may be that those born into that other life without the faith, love, or spiritual capacity which they might have developed, may find themselves in a world of darkness and misery, of which the pictures given by Christ are only a sign. Browning, in his "Easter Day," shows us a daring portrait of a man allowed by the Divine

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Judgment to have all that he had cared for here, and yet to be agonised because he was without that love which alone made existence tolerable. Never, perhaps, more than here is it necessary for us to commend ourselves to every man's conscience by the manifestation of the truth. It is worse than useless to be repeaters of dark phrases to which we ourselves can attach no reasonable significance. Sermons, then, if they are to be Apostolic and modelled after Christ's example, must be urgent and serious.

II. REALITY.—But this urgent Gospel when preached must be real, a part of the preacher's living experience. He must have known something of its dread and something of its salvation, something of the darkness and something of the light. Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, is perhaps the greatest preacher of judgment the world has heard, but this because he had known it. As Carlyle says, "It is at bottom the sincerest of all poems. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts, and it goes deep and through long generations into ours. The people of Verona when they saw him on the streets used to say, 'See, there is the man that was in hell.' Ah, yes, he had been in hell—in hell enough, in long, severe sorrow and struggle, as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. Commedias that come out *divine* are not accomplished other-

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wise." But he also knew of heaven. The *Inferno* would have plunged us into despair had it stood alone. The Gospel called for the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, and the quiet, calm confidence with which Dante assures us of salvation. He had been in heaven as well as in hell. So, too, Savonarola, he made the gay city of Florence shake with terror at the judgment of the Lord. But he had seen it with his own eyes. "I say to thee, Italy and Rome, that the Lord will tread upon thee. His feet shall be the horses of the foreign armies that shall trample upon the great men of Italy, and soon shall priests, friars, bishops, cardinals, and great Masters be trampled down." That was a vision of his own experience, and the truth of it was felt through his fiery words. But he, too, knew that that was only one aspect. Salvation and God's love were ever on his lips. Again, we all know how Bunyan's "City of Destruction" and the "Progress along the Heavenly Way" have gone home to the hearts of all men. This power they have because the story he tells is not a fancy or an imagination, but an expression of his own experience. He had passed along the same way himself, had known what it was to be lost and what to be saved. So with ourselves sincerity here is a *sine qua non*. We may not be able to feel so intensely or so deeply as these men, but we must feel sincerely, must

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have had some living experience, or else the note of urgency when struck will be dumb. We must be real. Very few can be eloquent, and fewer still powerful enough to lift men off their feet, but we can be absolutely sincere, saying no more than we know or think we know, and then in spite of awkwardness or stumbling speech, in spite of poor, unexpressive words or inconsequent reasoning the people listen, for the man behind the mask is speaking, speaking of the greatest things in heaven and earth, man's judgment and man's destiny. Reality is always striking, always effective. "There is a sympathetic impulse at once felt, directly the mind recognises that the person speaking is in earnest; he is then the centre of all minds round him." There is life and intentness in the whole sense of thought, just as when a wire vibrates, or a spring leaps and fastens the stray material that comes near it. "Only," writes Dr Pusey, "when the soul goes forth of itself and speaks to the soul can man sway the will of man. Eloquence then is all soul, embodied it may be in burning, forceful words, but with power above the power of words, an electric force which pierces the soul addressed, transposes it into another's thoughts by making it its own, by going forth of itself." Not that the preacher himself is conscious of it. He has no thought about being real. He is not simulating sincerity.

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He is lost in his work because it is he himself. The style is literally the man. And as we listen "we see as he sees, but we see not him, we become part of him, feel with him, judge, behold with him, but we think of him as little as of ourselves. Do we muse of Aeschylus as we wait on the silence of Cassandra, or of Shakespeare while we listen to the waiting Lear? Not so, the power of the Masters is shown by their self-annihilation." It may be thought we have overpressed an obvious commonplace. And yet the remarks we sometimes hear in praise of a preacher, "Oh, but he is so much in earnest," seems to suggest that whether reality is common or not, the impression is somewhat rare.

III. INTEREST.—But reality is not sufficient. The shouting of a few great Bible texts with intensity will not move men's souls. For they have minds as well as spirits, judgments as well as passions, reasoning faculties as well as impulses. Though the thought is of first importance, its expression is hardly less important. Much must depend on the way in which the Truth is presented. And there is no greater example in human history to guide us in this matter than Christ Himself. When we think of the very busy life He led; when unoccupied with healing, engrossed in training His disciples, never having a moment to Himself except that which He snatched from the

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short hours of rest, it is a marvel, even whilst recognising Him to be the very Word of God, to find His moving teaching on the greatest of subjects in such perfect form. But His form was not only exquisite, as the parables reveal, but always adapted to the comprehension of His hearers. He knew how stupid and unresponsive they were. Quoting a passage from Isaiah He says, "This people's mind is dull and heavy, their hearing has become dull, their eyes have they closed (so as) to prevent their ever seeing with their eyes, or hearing with their ears, or understanding with their minds and turning back so that I might heal them." A terrible description of the popular indifference of His day! And yet His sermons always won attention. How was it? He adopted what has been called the parabolic form. "Without a parable spake He not unto them." That method was entirely successful. They heard Him gladly, for He spake not as the Scribes from tradition and the sayings of others, but with authority, out of the experience of life. Even if they could not understand the meaning the stories won their attention, excited their curiosity. For they were in familiar terms. They were all taken out of their own life. Their material was lamps, bushels, nets, leaven, ploughs, treasure hidden in a field, seed sown in the ground, fish caught in the sea, just those things with which His

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hearers were familiar. Now it is a farmer distressed at the loss of a sheep, now a woman who has lost a jewel given by her husband on her wedding day, now a father whose son has left him for a life of dissipation. These experiences were common and they listened eagerly.

Now we must follow His method. Parables, as you know, are those means we use for the purpose of drawing comparisons, for by comparisons or likenesses, as Archbishop Trench says, "we are pleasantly taught." "There is a natural delight which the mind has in this form of teaching, appealing, as it does, not to the understanding only, but to the feelings, the imagination, and in short to the whole man, calling the whole man, with all his powers and faculties into pleasurable activity, and things thus learned with delight are those longest remembered. "This delight," he says, "has impressed itself upon our language—to like a thing (liken) is to compare it with some other thing which we have already before our natural or our mind's eye, and the pleasurable emotion always arising from this process of comparison has caused us to use the word in a far wider sense than belonged to it at first. That we like what is like is the explanation of the pleasure which rhyme gives us." "I likes the likes," was a poor woman's appreciation of the parabolic element in Holy Scripture. But

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this is everywhere acknowledged. It is the secret of the power of Robert Browning's poetry. He clothes his great thoughts, as Mr Chesterton reminds us, with such common objects of manual life as "suburban streets, stairs, garden rakes, medicine bottles, pianos, window blinds, burnt cork, fashionable fur coats"; for "there is nothing so fiercely realistic as sentiment and emotion. Thought and the intellect are content to accept abstractions, summaries, and generalisations, they are content that ten acres of ground should be called for the sake of argument,  $x$ , and ten widows' incomes called, for the sake of argument,  $y$ : they are content that a thousand awful and mysterious disappearances from the visible universe should be summed up in the mortality of a district, or that ten thousand intoxications of the soul should bear the general name of the instinct of the sex. Rationalism can live upon air and signs and numbers. But sentiment must have reality: emotion demands the real fields, the real widows' houses, the real corpse, and the real woman. And, therefore, Browning's love poetry is the finest poetry in the world, because it does not talk about raptures and ideals, and gates of heaven, but about window-panes and gloves and garden walls. It does not deal much with abstractions . . . It awakens in every man the memories of that immortal

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instant when common and dead things had a meaning beyond the power of any dictionary to utter, and a value beyond the power of any millionaire to compute." And it was the secret of Danton's moving eloquence. Of him we are told that he had a "natural predisposition to a powerful materialisation of every idea, to choosing comparisons drawn from nature rather than from history or moral—thunderstorms, electricity, lava, the sea, the mountains, rocks, torrents, or physiological phenomena of various kinds. This endued his speeches with a truculent power, and differentiated them in a striking manner from others of the period during which the Ciceronian form of address was the only form of address that met with general approval." But all this is only what the old Persian proverb says in the words, "He is the best preacher who can turn ears into eyes." Sight is the short road to knowledge, it is also the direct path to love. The eye is the first, the readiest, the surest of instructors. Therefore, the art of description must be learned, and the mind must be furnished with copious illustrations supplied from the lives of those we know. And here you will find most useful a commonplace book, in which you should place what you yourselves have heard in sermons, books, newspapers, or what you have seen with your own eyes in the houses of the people you have visited. It

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needs great care and that ready, considerate understanding which will avoid hurting the feelings of others, or belittling the great subjects of which we speak. There is a danger, perhaps greater to-day than in any past age, of vulgarity, of using slang words because we think they will arrest attention. But if tempted to follow that path, it is sufficient to remember how He spake, lifting men up to the feet of God, and making them feel they were in the heavenly places. It has often been asked whether the preacher is ever justified in speaking of his own experiences. I can remember one sermon preached by an extreme Anglo-Catholic, in which for at least half an hour he gave us the extremely interesting narrative of his own conversion: and I shall never forget Archbishop Benson speaking in a little village church of how the Epistle to the Hebrews had no less than three times saved him from spiritual danger. Both these experiences excited the greatest attention. They were the repetition of that old invitation, "Come ye, children, and hearken unto me, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul." Sir Andrew Clark's address to the Y.M.C.A., afterwards reprinted as *The Physician's Testimony*, is a good example of how such a difficult task may be fulfilled. There is no question of its spiritual effectiveness if sparingly used. It brings the

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congregation at once into touch with the speaker as one who is willing to share his confidence with them, and gives a new sense of reality; they feel the truth has been tested and approved in practice. It is no longer something in the air, but has found expression in outward shape and lives before them. But all that I have said comes to this in the end, that whether personally experienced or made real in other ways, it is essential that our whole soul should be engaged in the message that we are to make on the Sunday. It matters not whether the congregation is the same that we have addressed for the last fifteen or twenty years, or whether it is one to which we have never before spoken. The message is new and vital, and of supreme importance. We have wrestled with it again and again in quiet solitude, and now the moment has arrived for setting it forth as best we can. It is said of Lord Randolph Churchill that before one of his great speeches he would shut himself up for two days absolutely engrossed in his subject, and refusing to allow himself to be disturbed by any thought alien to it. Not many priests can do that, but all can make it such a perpetual subject of prayer during the week that they cannot hold it back. A country priest when preaching away from home suddenly found in the church where he had been asked to preach two men who

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occupied positions of the highest importance in church and state. He gave his simple message, for he was not in the ordinary sense a preacher, as best he could, and went home with a strong sense of failure. As a matter of fact he had made an extraordinary impression specially upon the minds of the two great people who sat below him. They were deeply moved, and instead of walking home together sought solitude in which to think over again the words that had so strangely affected them. "Not by might nor by power but by the Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

IV. EXPOSITION.—Now it is quite obvious that only one such sermon could be preached on the Sunday, as only one such sermon could be prepared for in the week. And yet most priests must preach twice. What is to be done? I think there is but one answer. Two sermons of a similar character not only lack sharpness and distinction, but congregations are apt to feel, naturally enough, that having had one appeal they have enough, and those who have not yet learnt the joy of worship stay at home. We need something different but equally arresting. And this is found in what is called Expository Preaching. As to the need of it, let me say this, that the spiritual power of your people will be in proportion to three things:—(1) The reality of their Eucharists. (2) The love of their

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Bible. (3) Their interest in Missions Overseas. It is with the second of these that we are immediately concerned, and it is the great pressing need. We may well thank God for the increased opportunities of Holy Communion ; more and more our Altars are thronged, and the number of our Communicants increased ; but knowledge has not kept pace with grace. Partly owing to the new attitude adopted towards the Holy Scriptures by men of high reputation, partly to spiritual indolence, they are less and less read. Consequently our people are becoming less spiritually intelligent, less intellectually alert, in fact they are, as the War revealed, shockingly ignorant of God. We must do our best to readjust the balance of grace and knowledge. We must show what an extraordinarily interesting book the Bible is, and give it that same freshness it had when first read to the people in their own tongue in the sixteenth century. You will remember the eloquent words with which the historian Green records the effect on the conscience and minds of men of the first English Bible. "England," he writes, "became the people of a book and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one English book which was familiar to every Englishman. It was read in churches and it was read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to

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their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm . . . the effect was simply amazing. The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class. . . . 'Theology rules there,' said Grotius of England, only ten years after Elizabeth's death. 'The whole nation in fact becomes a Church.'" That is just what we want with our own people. We want the congregation to be vitally interested in religion, to have their eyes opened and their hearts quickened, to feel religiously not only when they are at Holy Communion but when they are at home. And without a knowledge of the Bible, now that men's minds are daily flooded with other knowledge, this is impossible. Even Professor Huxley felt that. "I have always," he said, "been strongly in favour of secular education in the sense of education without theology, but I must confess I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious feeling, as the essential basis of conduct, was to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters without the use of the Bible." So Matthew Arnold in well-known words, "As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, and a man with a sense of poetry not cultivating it by

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the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense of conduct not cultivating it by help of the Bible." Our people will never be religious without it, for it is the way to that knowledge of God which is eternal life. It is of no use to say that in past days the Bible was only scantily known through the Liturgical Gospels, and yet the Church nourished and brought up Saints. The times are now changed. Every one can read, and printing has brought all the literature of the world to our doors. Men's hearts are no longer virgin soil but filled with prejudices, fancies, and ideas. And most of these have no reference to the great facts of Divine Revelation, which from lack of study became more and more unreal. Now, the Bible is the only corrective. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

But assuming this, how is this knowledge to be supplied? So far as the great mass of the people are concerned, only through the pulpit. Bible classes, useful and helpful as they are, affect too small a proportion of our people to be useful in the way we desire. The work must be done in the pulpit, but I need hardly say that it cannot be done through textual preaching. That has its advantages, and must always retain an important place in the ministry of the Word, but it will

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not, and does not, lead our people as a whole to read their Bibles. There must be expository preaching.

And it is well to remember that this has the authority of our Lord's example, that of St Paul, and that of the most illustrious of the great preachers of every age. In the only official sermon of Christ of which we have any account, we are told sufficient to lead us to believe that He not only read the lesson for the day, but targummed or translated it for the benefit of the people, and then applied it. So, too, it was St Paul's habit to take the Old Testament Scriptures and expound their meaning by applying them to the needs of his time. So, again, it was the practice of the great preachers of the ancient Fathers; Augustine and Chrysostom were, so far as we know their work from the records left to us, if not in the main, yet to a large extent, expounders of Scripture. Of St Chrysostom a recent writer says, "He was a Master in the exposition of the Scriptures. . . . He sought authority for his message in what he significantly described as 'The Word.' There lay his power with the common people, and in maintaining that power he expounded almost the whole field of the Scriptures. A list of his writings would fill a page in the catalogue of a library. He was not a keen-eyed grammarian, and not always a careful exegete, but

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as to the broad truth, the moral purpose, and the spiritual dynamic of the Scriptures, he was never uncertain and seldom astray." And this high and ancient authority has not been without its effect in our own time. The most effective, if not the greatest of modern preachers, have given much of their time to exposition. Dr Dale, whose addresses on the Epistle to the Ephesians, and the Epistle of St James, rank amongst the most successful efforts of the kind, tells us that it was his custom from the beginning of his ministry to preach expository sermons. Robertson of Brighton announced his intention of doing so a few months after he began his ministry at Trinity Chapel. Maurice, in spite of the interest he felt in social questions, nay we may say because of it, gave in his books entitled *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament — The Kings and Prophets; The Gospel and Epistles of St John*, a proof of the importance he felt belonged to Holy Scripture as offering a solution of modern problems. So, too, Bishop Gore, when Canon of Westminster, set an example in London which, I am glad to say, the late Dean of Westminster followed with great success, of giving expositions of the New Testament. It will be said that the selection of such great names is no further help than the use of such names as the Bishop

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of Ripon would be in urging the value of extempore preaching, that expository preaching is only for the few, that in the hands of the many it would be dull and wearisome, and empty our churches. There is no reason for this if there be moderate care and insight. There are but two requisites for successful Biblical preaching : (1) Definite comprehension of the historic sense ; (2) Skill in detaching its inner ethical and spiritual suggestiveness, in other words, the historic and the suggestive—the literal and the poetic. Truth for the understanding and fire for the imagination. Fact for our sense of reality and principle for our practical guidance. The exposition of a passage requires, indeed, less critical acumen than that of a text where everything may depend on a particle. We need not then shrink from the task because the burden of practical work has dulled the edge of scholarship—nor ought we to fear the lack of the power of Spiritual insight. Personal devotion to the Bible will supply the latter, and libraries are full of helps for the former. It is, of course, of the first importance that we have “exegetical divination,” *i.e.* inspiration to catch the inner meaning of a passage—suggestiveness and penetration sufficient to see what it means—but here the way is open to all who have received the Unction of the Holy Ghost. As Robertson said to a friend two years before

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his death:—"Receive—imbibe—and then your mind will create. Poets are creators because recipients. They open their hearts to Nature instead of going to her with views of her already made and second-hand, so with Scripture, patient, quiet, long, revering, listening to it; then suggestiveness. In other words, make the Word a daily meditation and the interpretation will come."

Such is the spirit; what is the method? This is Dr Dale's brief account of it, and I can find no better: "If the passage is a consecutive argument in support of any doctrine, or an exhortation to the discharge of a moral or religious duty or the expression of any sentiment or emotion, this doctrine, duty, emotion or sentiment is generally the subject of the sermon. If the passage treats of a succession of truths or duties, it is sometimes my endeavour to know how they are related to each other; sometimes I take one of them and leave the rest . . . sometimes when I have finished a book I have given a summary of the whole of it"—and he adds: "I found that a summary of the Epistle to the Galatians was quite as exciting as a fiery pamphlet on some question of modern party politics."

I can imagine someone saying, "All this may be true enough about the use of the New Testament, but that of the Old we must forgo till the questions of higher criticisms are more settled."

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Let me remind you of the words of one who occupies a position in the front rank of higher Critics—the late Bishop of Winchester, now Dean of Westminster:—

“The pulpit,” he said, “is not the lecturer’s desk. The preacher is set apart to preach the Word of God, and though all truth is comprehended in that phrase, he is primarily the preacher of a spiritual message. He declares the gospel of Jesus Christ. His first duty is concerned with the words of Eternal Life. . . . The preacher on the Old Testament, therefore, is occupied with spiritual, doctrinal, moral and practical questions—not with the results of research. For him as a pastor and spiritual guide the Old Testament contains the Holy Scriptures as they were used for the same purpose by our Lord and His Apostles. Our Lord’s own use of the Old Testament Scriptures should be our guide.”

Of course, it goes without saying that for this work the preacher himself must be soaked in the Holy Scriptures. As George Herbert says, “The chief and top of his knowledge consists in the Book of books, the storehouse and magazine of life and comfort, the Holy Scriptures. There he sucks and lives.” And unless he does so his work will be largely barren. Your people will not love the Scriptures unless you do; they will ignore them if they find that you do. Don’t be under the delusion that the

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reading of the daily Lessons, though of some value, will ever of itself make you an able minister of the Word. There must be real study every day, and that of itself will give you the material you want for Sunday. And do not say that half an hour, which is all your people will stand, is not enough for exposition. Exposition can be better done in a short time than preaching, for it not only concentrates the mind of preacher and people on one subject through the common text of the Word which both have, but it remains a possession after the service is over. When ability is small and the work is in the beginning, the reading of the passage selected in modern speech—and there are admirable books available—will arrest the attention, and make the comments eagerly looked for. It will be necessary that each has the opportunity of a New Testament to follow, but is that less important than a book of hymns and prayers? I have spoken of the value of expository preaching for the people. Its recommendation does not lie in that alone. The advantages it brings to the preacher are even greater than those it has for its congregation. It broadens his mind, develops his spirit, and quickens his devotion. He grows in discernment of character and spiritual power. See to it, then, that you make this an important part of your ministry of preaching, for none will bear better fruits.

## CHAPTER IV

### Making the Blind to See and the Deaf to Hear

WE now turn from the work of preaching to that of teaching. They are not the same, though closely allied. A man may be a good preacher and not a very good teacher, or a good teacher and not a very good preacher. The work of preaching is that of arousing the sleepy, sluggish and indifferent to a sense of the magnificence of the Gospel, the amazing love of God, the danger of ignoring it, the hideousness of sin, and the glory of the Christian life. Necessarily it must be largely by way of appeal though founded on reason, and proceeding by way of argument, and necessarily it must be comparatively short, rarely exceeding the half-hour. It relies for its effectiveness largely on that magnetic unction which, as we have seen, is derived from a living experience of the truth that is being preached.

The work of the teacher is different. He must necessarily speak of great Truths which he himself has only imperfectly apprehended, for he has the whole Faith to make clear.

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But he has time at his disposal. He can, if he has his hearers well in hand, lecture for an hour. He is intent on convincing the reason rather than warming the heart, on influencing the imagination rather than conscience. He is a builder up of character, first laying the foundation and then constructing the house of God upon it piece by piece, with a strong timbered floor of fundamentals, ornamented ceilings of beauty, easily opened doors of intellectual hospitality and sympathy, large spacious rooms with wide open windows, and all flooded with the air and sunshine of Truth. This is what the New Testament calls edification or spiritual building, and you will remember how often the word *δικοδομεω* and its derivatives occur, showing how much stress is laid upon it. But it is only done little by little, and requires not only a good architect, but a builder who is ready to follow the plans laid down by Christ, and to be patient with the inevitable difficulties of construction.

Now this work is of the greatest importance. It follows after preaching as naturally as study after lectures. If the appeal has been successful, those influenced will be anxious to learn. And we must be able to supply their need. Without it a congregation will be shallow, flighty or sentimental. So both the Scriptures and the Ordination service lay much stress on a readiness and aptitude for teaching in those

who are called to the ministry. St Paul, when writing to Timothy about the kind of men he should select for the ministry, not only insists that the candidate should be blameless, sober, self-controlled, and modest, but he must be able to teach (*διδακτικῶς*), and again in his second letter, perhaps the last he ever wrote, he urges that the servant of God should be not only inoffensive towards all men and patient under wrongs, but a skilful teacher. It is as essential as gentleness.

So, too, the Church in the Ordination service asks as its second question, "Are you determined to instruct the people committed to your charge and to teach them?" and "Will you give faithful diligence so to minister the Doctrine and Sacraments and the discipline of Christ, that you may teach the people committed to your charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same?" And this teaching is described as being of a limited character. It is to be based on the Holy Scriptures. "Are you determined out of the Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as required of necessity for eternal salvation but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures?"

Again, your duties require it. A great deal of your time must be taken up with Confirmation classes, Bible classes, catechising and instruction of children.

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I say nothing here of the necessity of learning in some school, or through some course of lectures, how to teach. Even if you are one of the few gifted people called "born teachers," your ministry of teaching will be all the better for experience under some wise guide in method and system. And if you are not, then you have everything to learn. Six months in a training college, or three months of practical experience under some capable headmaster, who would guide you in your reading and allow you to watch others teaching, and sometimes to take a class in religious instruction, would make the whole difference to your ministry. The Church, on the whole, is deficient in teaching power, as many a village or town church will testify, and that because she takes the instruction of her children lightly. When we remember that the State requires an authoritative certificate of theoretical and practical fitness before she allows any one to teach those things that concern this life, it seems strange that in the much higher and more difficult sphere of the things which concern both this life and the next no skill or knowledge should be thought necessary.

But having said this, which you may learn for yourselves from Dr Fitch's *Lessons on Teaching*, or Professor James' *Talks on Psychology for Teachers*, I pass at once to the very important subject as to what should be the aim of the teacher.

I. THE GREAT TEACHER AND HIS AIM.—To make this clear we must first remember that our Lord passed amongst the people of His time as a Teacher, the centre of a school of young men who were always with Him, and then consider what His aim was and how He hoped to carry it out. He was emphatically the Great Teacher. Nicodemus, who was himself a teacher (our Lord recognises it, “Art thou the Teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things?”), and knew what teaching was, not only ascribes to Him the title, “Rabbi,” but also confesses that all felt Him to have great power in teaching: “We know that Thou art a Teacher, and a Teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs which Thou doest except God be with Him.” Here it is interesting to note that teaching and signs are indissolubly connected, the latter giving to the former authority and illumination. His school was at first small, consisting of but twelve men; it then became larger, as large as seventy. The smaller school was peripatetic. It was always with Him, and had the great advantage of not only having continual lessons, but learning by the things which they saw even more than by what they heard. That they had much to learn is plain. As Dr Glover has shown in his *Jesus of History*, “the times were very hard and cruel, and the spiritual background amazingly dull and formal.

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Our Lord's work, then, was exceptionally difficult. It was to induce them to rethink God, to rediscover Him, to re-explore Him, to live on the basis of relation with God. This was not simply an intellectual process, but a process that was to issue in self-crucifixion. To believe in God in a general sort of way, to believe in Providence at large is a very different thing from getting yourself crucified in the faith that God cares for you, and yet somehow wishes you to endure crucifixion." But the rediscovering of God was not the whole aim. The disciples were to receive, in a comparatively short time, the greatest gift God has to bestow, the mysterious gift of the Holy Spirit. For the reception of that blessing special preparation was necessary. Not everyone could receive it. Our Lord says, "The world cannot receive it because it knoweth Him not neither seeketh Him." Personal sight as well as personal knowledge were necessary, *i.e.* spiritual sight and spiritual knowledge for the Person whom they were to know is Spirit. This necessarily demanded time. Now note here that though this is a purpose different from that of most educators, who are content if their pupils have fulness of knowledge; yet some, like the great Pestalozzi, had seen something of it. He, we are told, gathered children into his own home that, by constantly seeing him and knowing him, they might

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catch his ways of looking at things, desiring, as he says, "not that they might know what they did not know, but that they might behave as they did not behave." It was a noble ideal, though it does not go as far as Christ's, which is "that they might see what they did not see and hear what they did not hear," that both eyes and ears might be opened, enabling them to realise God's Presence ever with them, and the power of Jesus Christ working upon the earth; that they might feel the nearness of Heaven, and the great company of angels and archangels, in fact, make their own that glorious sight which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes in the words, "You are not come to a tangible, visible mountain, but to Mount Zion (only seen by the eye of faith), and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel." It was for visions such as this that He trained them. Vision first and then the gift of the Spirit. It is always that order. You must first see before you can receive any spiritual gift. You may remember the old story about Elijah and Elisha. He

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was parting with his pupil Elisha, and begged him to tell him whether there was anything he would like him to ask God for before he passed away. Elisha replied that he most of all desired a double portion of his master's spirit, not meaning that he wished to be twice the man his master was, but that as he was to take his master's place he might have the elder son's portion, *i.e.* twice what others had, that so he might fulfil his heavy responsibilities.

Elijah replied by saying, "If thou seest me when I am taken away it shall be so, but if not it shall not be so." Vision was necessary for the gift of the Spirit. This is not unnatural. Does not the artist, whose pupil begs and craves that he may be able to do something more than draw accurately, or colour naturally, namely, catch his master's spirit, tell his pupil, "You will catch my spirit when you see what I see." You may remember how Ruskin puts this thought in one of his lectures, when drawing attention to a floor tomb in St Croce, Florence, depicting a mediæval, scholarly figure with folded hands. He bids the pupil notice the cap, saying, "If you can see that the lines in that cap are both right and lovely, then you can understand Giotto's drawing and Botticelli's, *i.e.* share their spirit. But if you see nothing in this sculpture you will see nothing in their thoughts."

Now this was our Lord's aim, to quicken

and develop the spiritual intuitions of His pupils. At the very outset of the ministry He stirred the spirit faculty in Nathanael by telling him that before Philip saw him when he was under the fig tree, He, the Christ, had seen him. Nathanael instead of being puzzled by this at once realised that the emotions he had felt during that time of quiet meditation were due to Christ's Presence though invisible, and cried out in high faith, "Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." Our Lord now saw that Nathanael had the germ of spiritual sight, and at once gave him the promise of a far more extended vision. "Thou shalt see greater things than these. Thou shalt see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." And this he did see in the wonderful miracles of Christ. Heaven was then open, and the servants of God were busy, healing here and there in obedience to their great King. He saw what the centurion saw, Jesus commissioning the angels and appointing their ministry.

This being the object of our Lord's education of His disciples, what method did He employ? It was twofold. That of signs and teaching, and of these signs were the more important. You will be surprised that I should say this, but on simple minds the things which we see make a deeper and more

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lasting impression than those which we hear, specially such things as the disciples were always witnessing. Let us look at this more closely. Try to put yourself back into the world of the Apostles, and picture the change that Christ's miracles would naturally make. Their life in the towns and villages had been very much like our own, with its humdrum routine broken by stories of malice, backbiting, and quarrelling, and no sign of God caring or punishing. They had their sick and suffering shamefully doctored, but there was nothing better, and no one seemed to mind very much. Their political life was equally stagnant. Their country was in the hands of foreign rulers, who did what they liked with them. Now and again there was rioting and disturbance, nothing of importance happened, and God never showed His Hand. Indeed, God seemed infinitely far away, very holy, very dreadful and awe inspiring, surrounded by innumerable angels who guarded all approach to Him. Now into this quiet, silent, God-forgotten life, there came suddenly flashings of Divine power, irradiations of Divine love. Village after village and town after town were thrown into wild excitement by strange stories of wonderful miracles. At one time it was a blind man, some poor beggar whom the whole countryside had long known and neglected, and now there he was seeing as well as any-

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one else. At another time it was a near relative of one of their own company, such as Peter's mother-in-law wasted away by fever, and then at the touch of Jesus throwing it off, and resuming her duties as though she had never had a sickness. Then it might be a man hopelessly paralysed, and now rejoicing in free movement. These things were everyday occurrences. No week passed by without them. Sometimes, indeed, even greater things happened, the dead came back to life again; at least three cases had been reported. But wonderful as these were they were eclipsed by the great nature miracles which all had seen. They never could forget the waves breaking over their boat and threatening to swamp it, and the instantaneous calm that followed as He rose and rebuked the winds and waves. Nor could the two scenes of the feeding of thousands of hungry men with a few loaves and fishes ever fade from their minds. And with these there was constantly seen the expulsion of demons from the possessed. These poor, witless, epileptic, distracted men, women, and children, who seemed to be under the control of some spiritual tyrant, were the perplexity of all religious thinking people as they are now. Now and again a Jewish Exorcist would meet with some success, but this was rare. Christ at once showed Himself to be their Master.

Christ never failed. Strange, obstinate cases of lifelong dominion were made completely well by a word. And once they witnessed a transference of this evil, hostile power from human beings to animals, which made them realise as never before that the evil was personal and objective rather than subjective.

Now we ask what was the effect of this continuous expression of Divine power and love shown again and again in deeds that made all men wonder. To the multitude they were miracles, *i.e.* things to wonder at, but to the disciples they were signs, things to be thought over. They were signs of another kingdom interpenetrating this, of another life invading this, in other words—the Kingdom of Heaven. The world of buying and selling, eating and drinking, was enveloped by a spiritual world. The veil separating them was for a time uplifted, they looked into the very sanctuary of God. For these miracles gave no basis for fanaticism or superstition; they were, as far as possible, removed from the wonders of idle curiosity, such as stir the minds of the ignorant to-day, as the Easter Fire, the winking Madonnas, or the liquefaction of a saint's blood. These were all related to a living Person Who in Himself united heaven and earth and had all the resources of God at His command. As Bishop Westcott writes: "Not by any

magical influence, not by any arbitrary will but by inward union with Him, who not only has life but is life, the ills of man were removed. The hand stretched out to touch or raise was but the apt symbol of a deeper union in that vital energy, by which all cures were wrought." So they obtained in a way which no teaching could have made for them, a certainty that God was very near, for had Christ not said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," and in the spirit of those words ascribed all these remarkable occurrences to Him. "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father." And not only near but very compassionate, delighting in removing disease, mental darkness, ill-health, sorrow, and anxiety. And further that this compassion was expressed not in isolated, separated acts, but in a spiritual kingdom of invisible effective agencies all divinely ordered and guided to bring peace to a disordered world. All this was not so much a matter of reasoning as of actual experience. They had seen with their own eyes the Kingdom of God come with power, they knew it was in their midst, and being taught by Him they prayed daily that it might come more and more, for at present it was only realised and seen in that little spot in Palestine, and there only obscurely through lack of faith.

Of course, the Kingdom was centred in Him

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their Master, He was obviously the King. And at first they supposed naturally enough that it was limited to Him. It was only after they had returned from a mission on which He had sent them that they found to their increasing astonishment that they themselves were the effective instruments of the Kingdom, that it worked through them as well as through Him the great Head, that they had power to tread on serpents, scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and that the demons were subject to them through His Name. They, then, were linked on to the power of the Most High, they were the Kingdom, and so when they came into a village the message they were to give, "The Kingdom of God is come right unto you," was literally true. And it was when they had made this the greatest discovery any man can make, made it by actual experience rather than teaching, that Jesus felt His instructions had not failed. He turned to His disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things ye see. For I say unto you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." They were now ready to receive that blessed Spirit which those who know Him not nor see Him are not able to receive. For the kingdom revealed to them was His King-

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dom, the power they felt was His Power, and the love they experienced was His Love. And when He was fully manifested, as He would be after Christ had gone to the Father, they would do even greater works.

Such, then, was the effect of the training by signs, a training constantly reinforced and helped forward by teaching. The signs by themselves would have been confusing and difficult to interpret, but explained and enlarged by daily teaching they had a most profound effect over their minds. They changed their whole point of view. Before it was earth-centred, now it was God-centred. Before it was the visible that most counted, now the invisible. Before there was but one kingdom—this earthly world of men ; now there were two kingdoms, and the more important one was the one they had just discovered. Just as some Melanesian islander thinks his isle the wide world till the Englishman arrives and tells him that the schools, the medical missions, the churches which cause him such surprise are the outposts of the British Empire brought very close to them, so these disciples realised that these new facts were the vanguard of the great Spiritual Kingdom. Now it is the recovery of this spirit-sense that is so necessary to-day, and it ought to be the aim of all our teaching, and specially in our preparation for Confirmation. For this is not simply a service

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of consecration to God, but a sacrament for the reception of the Holy Ghost through the Laying on of Hands. It may be that this has not been very clearly taught, or that the preparation has not had that very definitely in view. Certain it is that our preparation for Confirmation is not bearing the fruits that the diligence given to it might lead us to expect. Those confirmed relapse in large numbers. The *Church Times* told us some time ago that it was estimated that there are five millions of confirmed Christians in England who are not communicants: an English Bishop who made an investigation said that in three years fifty per cent. had been lost: whilst an experienced priest in my diocese who takes pains with his candidates, said that two-thirds were lost in five years. And lastly, that startling book, *The Army and Religion*, shows clearly enough that not only had numbers of the Confirmed given up their Communions but practically given up their faith. What, then, is the matter? Does it not lie in this that we have forgotten that the Christian faith is largely a matter of spiritual experience. We had hoped that if the minds of our hearers were well informed, then they had in the bulwark of the Faith a sufficient protection against all difficulties and dangers. But the intellect is as prone to forgetfulness as it is to acquisition. We forget quite as easily as we retain. Things we learnt at school are quickly gone, unless

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they are wrought in with our experience. Our languages, our algebraical signs and symbols, our history and geography, have been pushed back to the dark world of unconsciousness by matters of more real and everyday interest. But, on the contrary, the mathematical formula that is proved in the shop is hard to forget, the intelligent analysis of some part of the body is at once remembered if it helps to fight a disease. So, too, the truth that God is our Father becomes part of ourselves when, in direct answer to prayer, He has supplied our need; the Cross a flaming reality after some horrible sin; the Sacraments life and power in dark depression. Confirmation lectures, then, unless they are largely illustrated by experience, will soon be forgotten in a crowded life.

Our children, then, like the Apostles, must be taught the reality of the unseen world. We are very deficient in this. In all parts of the world except our own, and in every race except our Anglo-Saxon race, there is a more sensitive perception to those facts of that Kingdom of God which were pressed home almost daily on the minds of the disciples. The Kingdom of Heaven with us, if it is anything, is a School of Ethics, or an ideal, abstract society which no one has seen; the Holy Spirit a Minister of Education or a Divine Influence; the other life is a long way off, and Christ a King in a far-away country. So we miss that familiarity

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with another Kingdom interpenetrating ours which Christ discovered for the Apostles, and which is still in other churches than ours, though covered with some superstition, a real present-day fact. We must do our best to restore it, and help our people to realise the romance of the faith as portrayed in the New Testament.

II. HOW WE MAY FOLLOW.—But how is it to be done? Where are our signs? Where are these plain evidences of the Kingdom of Heaven? They are nearer and more abundant than we think. We have, in the first place, the very valuable records of missionary work full of remarkable spiritual interventions and wonderful signs. Biographies of Christian men and women who have given their lives for the faith, and the magazines of the S.P.G. or C.M.S., with the numerous records of work in Central Africa or India, will supply many remarkable proofs that Christ is to-day confirming the Word with signs following. We have also our own personal experience of God's dealing with ourselves and with others whom we have known, or whose lives we have read. These show that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that He does to-day calm the storm, supply the needs of men, heal the sick, expel the demons, and that all that is needed is the faith that can claim the old promise that He is with us "all the days."

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It is this that our candidates want to know. It is not whether the Gospel is reasonable, but whether it is effective. Does it work? And that is what you must first show them. They are familiar in their everyday life that great causes have great effects, and they wish to know that the Gospel is Power before they will be interested in the further question that the Gospel is Light. "A Power that works miracles, a Power that can change the habits of a lifetime, perhaps the very tissues of a poisoned body, and can give both peace and guidance to the soul that is dragged this way or that." That is a Power they long to be acquainted with. Can you assure your class of that? Can you make them realise the acts of power done, not only in Galilee but in Great Britain, not only two thousand years ago, but to-day? This is essential, and without it our instruction fails. But whilst saying this, I hope I shall not be misunderstood as though I underrated the drill of the Catechism. Because the repetition of the Catechism and the formal knowledge of it carries us a very little way, it must not be supposed that it is not necessary. Arithmetic must be learned if we are to be profitable buyers and sellers. Languages must be mastered if we are to get into fellowship with those living in other lands. Physiology must be studied and known if we are to minister to the sick. So with the Catechism,

we must be familiar if we are to become the friends of God and sharers in His mysterious gifts. It is only when these helps to knowledge are used in an abstract way that they are not only useless but hindrances. Then we are apt to rest in them, as we used to do with problems in Euclid, without considering what their relation to life is. The Catechism, then, must be carefully learned by heart, and its meaning clearly explained. The candidates must know their Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and be familiar with the thought as well as the language of the Sacramental teaching. But all this as explanation of this Kingdom of Heaven which presses on us on all sides. So we show what great power the Creed has had in framing and fashioning the lives of men, what changes prayer has wrought, what saints' obedience to God's law has made, what a mighty uplift in distressful times the Sacraments have given. Eyes are then opened, ears are unstopped, interest is keen, the power of Jesus is manifested, and the Church felt to be really His Body through which He acts to-day as surely as through His earthly body long, long ago.

But, it will be said, such a training is that of mystics. Well, if a mystic is one who sees behind the outward appearances of things, it is. But every instructed Churchman will know that not only are all our services mystical, *i.e.*

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dependent for their worth, reality, and dignity on realisation of the Spiritual Presence and activity of God that is not apparent to eye or ear; but that of all it is Confirmation that makes the greatest demand on our faith, Confirmation that is most mystical. And let us not be afraid of the word mystic; in its simplest sense every Christian is a mystic, and certainly no one ought to venture on the sacred mission of Holy Orders unless he has been habituated to look not at the things which are seen and are temporal, but at the things which are not seen which are eternal. We cannot forget Keble's plain words :—

“ Two worlds are ours ; 'tis only sin  
Forbids us to descry  
The mystic heaven and earth within,  
Plain as the sea and sky.  
Thou Who hast given me eyes to see  
And love this sight so fair,  
Give me a heart to find out Thee,  
And read Thee everywhere.”

But our success with our Confirmation candidates largely depends on the preparation they have had as children. Nothing is more important than this, and if I have given most of the time at our disposal to their training when they reach the years of discretion, it is because they necessarily come then under your personal instruction, whereas up to that time they are chiefly in the hands of others, their parents and teachers.

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III. THE CHILDREN AND TEACHERS.—Nevertheless you will, if you follow the Great Example, always have a love for the children. From His invitation to them, His indignation with those who might injure them, His appreciation of their simplicity, His interest in their games, it is evident that they gave Him one of the few pleasures of His life. They were always to Him "My Lambs," and He lays the duty of caring for them very solemnly on our conscience. On their religious training depends the future of the Church you serve. You must, therefore, use all the opportunities you can. I can only speak briefly and rather at large than on direct personal intercourse with them. That must be left to the many good books on child life and training written by experts, but in passing I must urge that the aim you set before you is not different from that of which we have been speaking. They must not be allowed to lose that vision of God and His Kingdom which they bring with them into this world. Though their reasoning about God is necessarily childish, it is founded on an experience which is more real than that of many of their elders. And they should be encouraged to retain and develop all they have. In their earliest years it is, perhaps, best to allow their fancies to be unchecked, to let their imagination have free course, always emphasising those parts that are likely to become

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permanent. But as our part is small compared with that of the teachers, the best way we can help them is through the teachers. So I say, Become friends with your teachers. Recognise that they are your fellow-workers in the Kingdom of God. Next to the clergyman they have the largest opportunities of influence for good or for harm, and it is important from the outset that we should have them with us on the side of Christ.

But not only this. They are inspired with our ideals for knowledge, they have some acquaintance with literature and science, often a real love of the poets. In the village they have no one with whom to share them except the clergyman. We should, therefore, give them our companionship, our patronage they will rightly resent, and recognise the importance and dignity of their work. And it may often be a help to us to watch their teaching, and express our appreciation of it, so that we enter the school as a friend. We must, of course, loyally recognise the fact that not all the children belong to our flock, and must respect the convictions of those parents who take advantage of Conscience Clause and withdraw their children from our teaching. Had we their convictions we should do the same. If we have opportunity it is best for us to take the teaching of the Catechism into our own hands, but in so doing it is well to

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remember that we are taking that which is the most difficult. The work of putting the great truths of the Catechism into such parabolic and simple forms that the children can understand them, requires the mind of a very skilful and interested teacher, and though, doubtless, many have done this work admirably for themselves, it has not, so far as I know, been yet put into writing for others.

IV. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.—From the day school we pass into the Sunday school. And here a word as to whether we may not do without one. Untrained and unpunctual teachers, the difficulty in finding them, and specially a superintendent who knows what a school ought to be, are formidable obstacles. For these and other reasons it has seemed best by the clergy of some parishes to adopt the Dupanloup Method, and have the children under our own instruction in church. If we are inclined to this, before adopting it we must bear in mind that (1) We lose a priceless opportunity of training and teaching those who, if they had not the care of children, would never come to a class. Our teachers may become, and frequently are, our best workers and friends.

(2) We must be prepared to spend a great deal of time on the work. The Dupanloup Method demands it not only in setting questions and correcting answers, but making such arrangements before each Catechetical

Service that all may work smoothly. Bishop Dupanloup made his plan successful, not only because he was a good Catechist, but because he gave a large part of his time to it. In a review of his life we learn that "for the first six years he wrote out all his catechisings beforehand at full length. The characteristics and progress of every child in all the hundreds who formed his classes were recorded carefully in his notebook; and all his matchless gifts of eloquence, of quickness and sympathy, were lavished with delight and enthusiasm upon this one task." "For me," he said, "the children have been my first love, and those to whom I have given the chief devotion of my life will also be my last." Of course, such a one was bound to achieve success no matter what method he might adopt. Unless, then, we are prepared to sacrifice a large amount of time, we had better maintain the Sunday school. Unprepared catechising from Sunday to Sunday will not only be of no value, but it will mean the loss of priceless advantages.

But the maintenance of the Sunday school will also demand a large amount of time. Unless we can find someone trained or ready to be trained as a superintendent, we should undertake the office ourselves, provided, of course, that we have the requisite knowledge, or are ready to acquire it. A clerical superintendent, who has had no experience of school

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work, will, unless he is an exceptional man, be of little use. There ought to be no marked difference in the order, discipline and quiet of the Sunday school from that of the day school. Such difference as there is should be rather in spirit and tone. The voluntary character which marks children and teachers ought to give it the features of a family gathering. With this in view there is much to be said for the practice of children remaining with their teacher till they leave the school, that she may have their entire training. But this makes a large demand on the staff, and means that there is no great difference between the capacity and ability of the teachers. Still, the alternative grading system is not without great difficulty.

The chief problem of the Sunday school is faced when the children leave it. This generally happens when they leave the day school and go to work. Not all are ready or willing to be confirmed, and there is great danger lest many be lost to the Church. Some method ought to be found by which not only their connection with the Church should be retained but deepened. This has been done by the Rector gathering them together in Church or elsewhere, and either following out with them some Catechetical method, or forming them into a class under his own care. It should differ from a Bible class in its greater familiarity

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between teacher and taught, in its freedom for questioning, and above all in its social character. At least every three months the members should meet for walks into the country or for games, boys and girls together, at the Rector's personal invitation. With the exception of the Confirmation class this is the most important work he has to do. And from personal experience there is none more interesting or fruitful. They are usually glad to have the dignity of belonging, in a special way, to the Rector, or the clergyman put in charge of them, and they enjoy the interest of noting down in their own special book, with which each is provided, those definitions, proverbs, or epigrammatic sayings which illustrate the particular subject that is taken. In this way we may stop the leakage that is ever going on in many schools, and just at the age when the children are needing the teaching most. But to sum up all we have said, it is well to realise that whatever methods we may adopt, none can be felt to have much value unless by it the children have learnt that religion is life and life religion, and that there is no real distinction between the religious and secular life. This is difficult but has been done. The great Pestalozzi, in describing the work of the ideal pastor, said "He connected every word of his brief religious teachings with their actual everyday

experience, so that when he spoke of God and eternity it seemed to them as if he were speaking of father and mother, house and home, in short, of the things with which they were most familiar." That is real religious teaching, and that is never forgotten. It requires earnest thought and study, it requires a knowledge and a love of those whom we teach, but above all it requires a real experience of the things we teach. "Art thou a teacher of Israel?" our Lord asked of one of the Rabbis who sought Him out that he might see this Kingdom of Heaven of which He spake. "Art thou a teacher of Israel and knowest not these things. We speak that we do know and testify that we have seen." That is the contrast Christ draws between the professional and the living teacher; the one reasons of things he had never known, which he nevertheless hoped might be true, the other speaks of what he has actually seen and felt. I need not say which is the more effective with children.

## CHAPTER V

### The Uplifting of Christ in the Sanctuary

MANY are the opportunities which the priest enjoys in the pursuance of his task, but there is none that is more dear to him than the public worship of God. Worship is the highest act of which human nature is capable. Its central emotion, as the Word itself declares, is admiration. It is that which we feel in the presence of some glorious view, in the hearing of some wonderful piece of music, in the expression of some devotion to an intimate friend, as in the wedding service, "With my body I thee worship"; and when carried into the realm of God it does not become less, but more intense, not more imaginary, but more real. They that worship God must worship Him in spirit, that is, in fulness of vitality as well as in truth, *i.e.* in accord with the truth of His glorious character.

The worship of the Church, therefore, ought always to have something of this double character of emotion and truthfulness. Our experience does not justify this expectation. In many churches it awakens no sentiment and portrays no attribute of God! Why is this?

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It would seem due to (1) Lack of Atmosphere ; (2) Inability to present Christ in that character which the particular service suggests ; (3) Indifference of the worshippers.

I. ATMOSPHERE.—There must be what we call atmosphere—some churches have it so permanently that even when there are no worshippers present it is felt and realised—others seem to be without it. It is not easy to define it nor to say how it is created, but it is a real factor in worship. There is no doubt that the beauty of the building, its arrangement of colour, its pictures on the walls or in the stained-glass windows, its altar, do, of course, suggest thoughts that create atmosphere, but we believe it would be possible to find it, though not so likely, in a plain, simple building. Some feel that it is due to the long continued and almost ceaseless prayer that is found in churches which are really Houses of Prayer, as though the nearness of God which prayer realises, still lingered after those who had prayed had passed away from the building. This would be an additional reason for urging people to use our churches for prayer, for the unconscious spirit of atmosphere does influence even those who would be independent of it : others refer it to the prayers which are made immediately before the service begins and to the attitude of faith and expectation which is created by them ; others, again, to a mystical

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sense of a Presence not visible yet sensibly felt, as though just as a father away from home in the flesh, yet by love and thought inspires the rooms of his home with his spirit, so Christ, though sitting at the right hand of God, yet adumbrates His Presence in the places where the manifestation of Himself is continually being made in the Eucharist. No doubt this is always in our churches, but our lack of faith and dulness of sight prevent our realisation of it. We must believe in it, or rather in Him whose gift it is, so that it is brought close home to us. Further, we must order all our churches and their ministrations as though we saw Him in our midst. Those who fail here, saying that He is as much in the woods or the meadows as in the Sanctuary, are found to miss Him everywhere, whilst those who make much of His Presence in certain places are more ready to find Him elsewhere.

This being so, we must take care our churches suggest His Presence as irresistibly as some scene in an act makes us sure that someone is about to appear. We may be thankful that our churches are far more cared for than they were fifty years ago, yet torn books, dusty seats, dead flowers, dull brasses, give a feeling that a house deserted by its occupants gives, that no one is present nor has been for some time. And this is often strengthened by the condition of the churchyard, where weeds and

long grass give a desolate appearance to the House of God that stands in its midst. There is not likely to be spiritual atmosphere under such conditions, but rather a sense of intolerable solitude as though it were deserted of God and man. This ought not to be so, at least the same care should be given that we spend on our own houses, and we should get others to share it. Usually there is found no difficulty in forming a Sanctuary Guild that will provide that quiet beauty and order within the church which may suggest the Presence of God, whilst the elder boys amongst the Boy Scouts or Church Lads' Brigade might look to the churchyard.

II. THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST.—In the second place, it is essential that when the faithful meet together the service should be so carefully ordered that it may excite in all present that admiration for the beauty and glory of God which is the principle of worship. It may be said that this is only possible where the aids to worship are abundantly supplied. But this is not so. A country church, poorly furnished with instrument and choir, can sometimes give more satisfaction to the spiritual appetite than a wealthy cathedral. Forethought, care and order, are all that are necessary. The stillness that pervades the building before the choir prayer, the precision and order that governs the procession, the

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unity and intelligence that marks the responses, the lowly reverence made to the Presence of the Invisible Christ on entering and leaving, the careful setting of the service in lights and vestures, the sense of quiet which no mistakes can disturb, and above all, the spirit of devotion which animates the whole, these things make tired and jaded people glad to be there to catch something of the music and glory that belongs to a far-off land. But it means constant patience and unlimited self-sacrifice. No results are obtainable without them. We must first think out what the church and its services are meant to express, and then take the utmost pains to secure it. Organists, men and boys, may at first be difficult to persuade, but when we have their confidence and they see what we are after, they too, will become as keen as we are.

1. *The Universal Standard.*—The worship of the Church being well ordered, we must see that it expresses, as far as possible, the great verities of the Faith in which she believes. Baptism expresses both the Death and Resurrection of Christ; the Holy Eucharist also attests the same great facts in the visible breaking of the bread and the communication of the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord; Confirmation expresses the gift of Pentecost; Marriage, the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church; Penance, the forgiveness of

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sins ; Unction, the healing of the sick ; Holy Orders, the Apostolic Mission. But these, if they are to be brought home to the minds of men, must be so exhibited that Christ is seen to be crucified, risen, ascended, healing, forgiving, giving the Holy Spirit and sending forth. St Paul was able to point the Galatians to the fact of Christ's crucifixion being openly proclaimed amongst them, doubtless through the Eucharist, which was the showing of the Lord's Death ; and from his instructions on Holy Baptism, in his Epistle to the Romans, it seems clear that the baptized on entering the water did feel that they were buried with Christ. In those days the symbolic actions of the service did mean something. Unconsciously they suggested the great facts they adumbrated. And they have been handed down to us that we may make them speak in that simple language of the eye which all can read. But do they ? Are they justified by the faith of our people ?

It is perhaps natural that a Nonconformist should feel that, except through the preacher, Christ is not clearly manifested in the services of the Free Churches. There is little or no symbolism. "We submit," he says, "that the casual visitor to any ordinary Free Church would never suspect from anything there to be seen that our Lord had ever been either born or crucified or exalted, or that anything

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in particular had ever happened either to Him or to us. Surely there can be no mortal sin in making certain that, whether the preacher is intelligible or not, no person attending a normal Christian service shall fail to have both the sorrows and glories of Christ forcibly suggested for his meditation."

"Forcibly suggested," he says. Can we, with all the advantages that are secured to us by an ordered Book of Common Prayer, and all the privileges which are ours through a long and well-maintained tradition, say that all who attend our churches never fail to be reminded of the great saving acts of our Redeemer. Let us look at this in detail, taking the main services in order.

2. *The Sacrifice.*—Let us first take the Celebration of the Eucharist. The purpose here is plain, the pleading of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ with special thanksgiving for the Resurrection, the power of which we receive through the Body and Blood of Christ. And the rite that expresses it is plain also. There is the Fraction of the Bread, attesting the broken Body, the Elevation of both Paten and Chalice, proclaiming the presentation before God; the Consecration, bearing witness to the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; and the solemn words, "Do this in remembrance of Me," binding us to take our share in His Sacrifice. These actions

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have with some priests been found to be so affecting that they find it difficult to proceed with the service. Not one point of it should be lost nor obscured. The congregation should be carried forward with the priest at each stage, for it is their fraction, their offering, their consecration, their whole act. It is never the solitary act of the priest, and must never appear to be so.

In Scotland in some places this congregational aspect is marked by the standing of the congregation for the Preface and the Sanctus, and, at least in one church, for the Consecration also, this having been introduced by a former non-juring incumbent in imitation of Eastern practice. It is a testimony to the fact that the congregation are identified with Christ in His great act on Calvary, which is an eternal act; He, the Lamb of God, sacrificed for us, bears the burdens of the whole world's sin. We express our desire to share this with Him. We say in the old words—

“ Use me Lord—use even me,  
Just as Thou wilt, and when and where  
Until Thy Blessed Face I see,  
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.”

We proclaim ourselves wholly His for any adventure, undertaking, or work to which He calls us, and which will in some way lighten His heavy load. “ We offer up ourselves, our

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souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice." And we do it gladly, for the Food we take is the Risen Life of One Who has power over all things in heaven and earth. It is in the Might of God, in which all things are possible, that we make our offering.

Such then is the Eucharist, a presentation of a Sacrifice which, though once made, is ever alive and never solitary, for it carries, or ought to carry, all His people with it, the whole Catholic Church and our part with it.

But is this what our people catch as they are carried along by the spirit of the service expressed in word and act? I have heard that in the very infrequent Presbyterian commemorations of the Lord's Supper, which outwardly suggest a Zwinglian interpretation, some of those present are so moved by the Death of Christ, of which they are led to think, that they cannot refrain from tears, but I fear that with us the Three Hours' Devotion on Good Friday, frequently causes deeper emotion than that service which was instituted for "the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ."

But what can be done?

(a) Let the emphasis be laid where the service lays it. This lies in the Prayer of Consecration which ought to be said plainly, intelligibly, so that all may hear and take part in it.

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(b) All communicants who are present, whether they receive or not, should be constantly reminded that they are there for sacrifice not for spiritual self-indulgence, for active co-operation with our Lord's redeeming act, not for the satisfaction of their own spiritual needs. A good woman, on being pressed by her Rector to be more constant in her attendance at the Eucharist said : "My husband and I don't feel any the better for more frequent celebrations." She could never have said this had she a high conception of the service, which was not designed to make her *feel* better, but to make her *act* better.

(c) Whilst making clear, through sermons, lights, hymns, etc., that our Lord makes a special manifestation of Himself in "the breaking of the bread," which we must all recognise with devotion, yet let all understand that the central object of the service is the Father before whom the Sacrifice is pleaded, and to whom all the prayers, except a word in the Gloria in Excelsis, are made. It is Christ bringing us to the Father, not the Father bringing us to Christ.

(d) Remember that you are not only the priest, but the servant of the Church, and that you have no right to be delaying the progress of the service by long, silent interpolations of your own. Laymen generally are not able to fill in these interposed silences, and chafe at

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the difficulty which they experience. They expect the service to go forward. You must not hinder.

(e) Lastly, it makes for the beauty of the worship if you and your congregation are one in your ritual expression of worship. It may be very full, fuller than Rubrics direct, or it may be bare, just what is prescribed. In the sight of God, who sees the heart not the gesture, the spirit not the manner in which it is expressed, this is unimportant, but what is important and always beautiful is the unity of expression. No scene would give us any satisfaction, in play or real life, where in some moment of obeisance towards king or chief the actors were indulging in individual eccentricities. We and our people must be taught to avoid these, and when with others to impose on themselves such self-restraint that they do not mar the harmony of the whole ; in some cases throwing themselves into a fuller expression than that to which they are accustomed, in other cases holding back that which they have learned. In that great Presence it is not for us to be thinking how we may best proclaim the Catholic faith in Him, but how best to behave.

3. *Burial and Resurrection.*—Much has been recovered of the dignity and beauty of the Eucharistic service, for which we cannot be too thankful, but a great deal yet remains before the Sacrament of Regeneration speaks

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as it ought of the greatness of the truths it enshrines.

The practice that widely obtains suggests that nothing very important is figured by it. The Church still strongly holds, in spite of wide spread unbelief, to the truth which it declares to be substantiated by Holy Scripture, that "being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath, we are made by Baptism the children of grace," that we are regenerated, received as God's children by adoption and "incorporated in His Holy Church." These are statements of far-reaching significance, and magnify the Sacrament which enshrines them to a position not far, if at all, short of that which the Eucharist occupies. Consequently the Church orders that it should be administered on Sundays and other Holy Days, when the most number of people come together, and in the vulgar tongue so that all may understand. It is to have dignity, simplicity, and publicity.

But in spite of the great reverence demanded by the Sacrament and the rules of the Church, it hardly ever takes place when the general congregation attends; on the contrary, it is purposely confined to such times when none but parents and those immediately interested can be expected to be present. It is said that few would come if it were known to be part of Mattins or Evensong, as the Rubric suggests, for congregations are bored by the service

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which is largely unintelligible to them. If this be true, it is strange that the Baptists, who deny any sacramental significance to the rite, should find that few services are so attractive to their people as that of Baptism. But then they make much of it, and the fact that it is confined to adults adds that kind of interest which Confirmation gives.

We make little of it, and seem to share that indifference which our Lord rebuked, that scepticism as to whether anything spiritual is either needed or can be effected in those who are so young as to be quite unconscious of the ceremony. This lack of faith must be met by the use of everything in our power. The service must be well advertised, and people must be led to feel that it is interesting and attractive. It is, of course, clear that it could not take place every week, and that the Rubric which provides that the people defer not the Baptism of their children longer than the first or second Sunday after their birth, unless upon great and reasonable cause, must often be ignored, as indeed it is. Things being as they are both Rubrics cannot be carried out, and if we must make choice it is better that this should give way.

There is really no more reason why an infant's Baptism should be more hurried forward than that of an adult. Indeed the latter, burdened with many conscious sins, really

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claims more urgency. And yet the Church wisely delays adult Baptism till the candidates are sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, and the Bishop has taken care for their examination. This instruction would not be less careful than that for Confirmation, and might reasonably be extended over two or three months. It would, therefore, seem reasonable that Baptisms, instead of taking place as they do, when hardly any witness them, should be reserved for great occasions, perhaps six or eight in the year. At these there should be the same expectation and interest raised as for a Confirmation. It should be the main feature of the service. The Font should be decorated, the choir and congregation carefully instructed as to the parts which they are to fulfil, and every proper ceremonial that could be added to give significance to the Sacrament should be used. Hymns should be sung, proper lessons read, and an inspiring sermon preached, that all present might realise how great a change passed over them when they were placed in the arms of Christ and received the adoption of sons. Occasionally it might be advantageous for the Bishop to baptize and confirm at the same time. The two Sacraments are complementary, the one to the other, and Church people might then learn in a speaking ceremony how intimately connected they were. The

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present position of what might not unreasonably be called *private* Baptism, is impossible if our lay people are to grow up in the faith that Baptism means regeneration. To most lay people it is an unintelligible ceremony, meaning nothing more than Church registration.

But the service itself, if conducted as ordered, is singularly beautiful, though it needs shortening. In the revision of the Prayer Book this will be done, but it is to be hoped that the significance of the burial in Christ may always be preserved by immersion. Pouring water upon the child, our present custom, is only permissible by the Rubric if a certificate is given that the child is too weak to stand it. With warm churches and warm water the fear of any risk to health is imaginary. So, not only for the sake of its symbolism, but of meeting a difficulty which some have afterwards felt, that they were not properly baptized, we hope this order may be more frequently followed as the regular custom. Then Christ is clearly manifested, as not only embracing the child; but placing it deep within the hidden virtues of His glorified humanity, and marking it with His Cross. And the Saviour of mankind is revealed as the Author and Beginning as well as the Perfecter of our faith.

We must never forget that congregations learn more quickly through the eye than the ear. Plain, forcible sermons may be preached

on Baptismal Regeneration, but they will never be heeded so long as the Sacrament which figures it is hidden away in a corner and so often ministered without spirit and power.

4. *The Mystical Union.*—It is much to be wished that criticism could stop short here, but the solemnisation of holy matrimony in many large parish churches leaves very much to be desired. We are slowly recognising the immense importance that is attached to the beginning of the married life. Now that divorce is so common, and the old traditions of the relations between a man and his wife, in many cases, overthrown by the ever-increasing wave of lust and pleasure, the Church feels she must witness not only to the purity of married life, but to the mystery that overshadows it. This she is trying to do by sermons and tracts. But her chief witness is the marriage service itself. The conduct of this has been greatly improved, but there are still more than we like to think to whom the service brings no sense of power or mystery. They were probably parts of a long row of careless men and women, marshalled by the parish clerk before the chancel steps, in helpless ignorance—no one had ever spoken to them about the service or about the mystery of the relationship which it embodied. Half-frightened lest they might be led to do the wrong thing, and wholly insensible to any grace it conferred,

they were glad when it was over. It seems incredible that such a state of things should anywhere survive. But bad customs, especially when hardened by financial considerations, are difficult to abolish, and it is not to be denied that, owing to the natural wish of young people to be married when they have holidays, it is by no means easy to see how a certain amount of crowding can be avoided. But, at least, it might be provided that all those who are to be married should be seen by the priest who is to marry them. He would not only explain the service, but give such wise and sympathetic guidance as might help them in their future lives. And no matter how many are to be married, we ought to make plain that the marriage service is a solemnisation of matrimony, *i.e.* it is giving to matrimony, which in the world is so often considered a subject for frivolous conversation, a serious and solemn aspect, and further imparting that divine grace which transforms it, from being a part of the world's order for the propagation of species, to an expression of divine love shadowing forth that mystical union that is betwixt Christ and His Church, and aiming at a new generation of sons and daughters who may rejoice in His Name.

But if it is to be this it must be expressed outwardly. Why should the service be more beautiful and dignified, as it is seen in some

royal wedding when care has been taken to have every part of it becomingly ordered, than when two peasants are to be married in their parish church. Of course, it would lack the pomp and circumstance which a great event in history demands, but it should have the same serious air of deliberation and freedom from hurry, the same forethought and care in all its outward ordering, with hymns, music where possible, and an address, sometimes made best at the beginning, when friends are light-hearted, rather than the end of the service ; flowers, carpeting, etc. ; and the impressive ritual features of the service, such as the giving of the ring, the joining of hands, the blessing of the bride and bridegroom being well marked ; all this would make an indelible impression. And even the indifferent would be led to feel that God had been with them from the start, and to be thankful that their marriage was in the church and not in the Registry Office.

“ Marriages often fail, because people often fail, and people fail ultimately for one central reason—that they have not God in their lives.” It is our high privilege to use this opportunity when men are more sensitive to their needs and responsibilities than at any other, so as to make them see that they may have God in their lives, and that they cannot live on human love alone ; that intimate as the fellowship between

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husband and wife is, it brings many difficulties of its own, which can only be successfully met in the help that comes from Christ. And here it may be said that much depends on the religiousness of the parish clerk. If he is merely an official, he will always spoil things and had better be got rid of. Happily such are becoming more and more scarce, the modern verger or church officer being often a keen, eager man out for the best interests of the Church. But such need help and sympathy, for to be closely associated with spiritual things calls for constant effort if they are not to become mere matters of routine. It would probably be well if they were solemnly set apart for their duties. Their office is the continuation of the *ostiarius* or doorkeeper, an office lowly in itself, but sufficiently important in the early days of the Church to be marked by episcopal ordination. We should, therefore, do our best to make him feel that he is not simply a church official but a minister in God's sanctuary, where faith and reverence will make a great difference to every rite at which he assists.

Enough has now been said to show what opportunities lie before us in the ministry of God's House. As we have seen they are of high importance. In some way or other our people, the most of whom have no privacy in their homes, must learn to recognise that God's

House is a place where prayer is wont to be made.

Nothing need be said about the service of the Burial of the Dead, except to emphasise such parts of the service as teach the presence rather than the absence of the departed, the rest and refreshment which the Church hopefully asserts that they have obtained, rather than their annihilation, which the broken column or the heavy slabs of marble still seen in churchyards seem to suggest. Their arrival in the Paradise of God is what ought to be made clear. The Church rightly contrasts "this miserable world," meaning, of course, this world of pain, sin, and constant infirmity, with the brightness of the life of the world to come, and bids us thank God that our friend has been delivered out of it. We should, therefore, discourage the use of such phrases as "poor So-and-so," as though the dead had gone out altogether or passed into darkness. The common phrase, "gone West," is not a happy one, and contradicts the Christian custom of burying the dead with their faces towards the East, symbolising His advent.

III. INDIFFERENCE OF THE WORSHIPPERS.— Such, then, should be our Ministry in the Sanctuary—of no less importance than the Ministry of Preaching or visiting. The Church should be our pride and joy, the services our great opportunities. Our people are much in

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the world, attracted by its sights and sounds, but once a week they gather to the House of God ; it is for us to see that in their visit there they have a greater sense of reality than when they are passing through the empty shows of the market-place. If put off there, it will be difficult to prevent their drifting into materialism ; if caught there, there is little to hinder their going forward with increasing joy and delight. But how is this to be done ?

In the first place, the church should be made the centre of the parish life. Its tower should have its flag, which, not only on St George's Day, but constantly throughout the year, should remind the people that something is going on. Our Festival and Anniversary days should be greatly increased. All national days and all Church days should be properly marked, as well as the greater and lesser Festivals of the Church. Not only Harvest Festivals, but Rogation Days, when farms and fields may be blessed, should have their proper place. Day School and Sunday School Festivals should be made much of, so that all those engaged in teaching should have their work honourably distinguished. There will be critics who will complain that the bells are always being rung, and that the parson is fussy, but the mass of the people like their routine broken, and, with their children, always enjoy anything that is in the least spectacular. The village quiet often

becomes oppressive, it is for the Church to break into it, and to show that religion touches every aspect of life, and that there are no genuine interests of human nature to which our Lord, the Father of the poor, is indifferent.

Further, those who are spiritually advanced should be taken to Retreats or Quiet Days. The gain after the first shyness has worn off is incalculable. They come back from sustained communion with God all aglow with devotion and earnestness, and with the wider outlook that new vision has given them. It is well, too, even at the cost of considerable sacrifice, to take all who can make it possible to the larger festivals of the Diocese, that they may gain a sense of the bigness of the Church. Festivals of the Girls' Friendly Society or the Mothers' Union give hope to those who ordinarily see but small numbers and hear but feeble praises. And much may be done where there is opportunity through Mystery plays, which lighten up the dark short days of winter, and give to those who are indifferent to the Church a sense of wonder besides stirring unknown depths. So without as well as within the Church, men are quickened to believe in the great powers of the Kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER VI

### Making Christ Known Through the Church

So far we have thought of the joy the priest finds in developing the Christian character of his people, a matter of unfailing interest ; he proclaims the great truths of the eternal Gospel ; in opening out new visions of the Kingdom of God and presenting dramatically and realistically those important facts of our relation to Christ which are sealed by the Sacraments. But nothing as yet has been said about his corporate life. In most professions, as well as in many societies, especially the Masonic, this aspect is of the greatest interest. The navy to the sailor, the army to the soldier, the university to the student, the lodge to the Mason, mean a great deal, and sometimes when challenged stir his deepest feelings. He may allow himself to grouse and complain, but woe betide any outsider who ventures to criticise that body to which he owes his friendships, happy experiences, and delightful memories. In his later years he loves to tell again some of the immortal stories which gave distinction

to that society to which he feels indebted for almost everything. Why does not the Church awaken similar enthusiasm? Why do we find it so hard to feel for that great Catholic and Apostolic Body that devotion which leads the officers of the other Services to venture all for that flag which symbolises their corporate life? Even that part of it which brought us up and to which we owe so much, our own church, as we say, awakens but few emotions of admiration and affection. Men avoid if they can the Diocesan gatherings and the Ruri-decanal meetings where it finds expression, and are not unknown to profess their indifference as to those things which concern the larger life of the Church as though their ignorance were a credit to them. And more especially is this the case if our attention is called to the Universal Church, the Church of the East and West. But we lose more than we think in so doing. The wider outlook alone supplies the tonic which we need when the things under our hand are going badly and patience sorely tried. As we look away from our tiny plot in the Great Vineyard and hear the song of the labourers in other parts, or see their toil and service, we take fresh courage, and feel a sense of pride in belonging to a world-wide spiritual Empire and being officers of an ever-victorious army against which the gates of hell have never prevailed. It will be well then to

awaken again this larger loyalty, to feel anew this esprit de corps so necessary for the Church as well as for ourselves. And with this end in view we shall first remind ourselves of our Lord's attitude, how He loved the Church, and so seek to be inspired by His devotion.

I. CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH.—In a previous chapter I said that it was the individual rather than humanity that attracted Him, but this must be taken with some reserve as we remember the words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." But this world was Humanity as seen in the Church. The world apart from God was evil. It was what you see in a great crowd of men, unreliable, impulsive, and often proud, defiant and hostile to God; that great god Demos that has been guilty of so many awful crimes. So we find our Lord speaking of it as an enemy. He judged and condemned it because it was guided and governed by a Prince who was always in active hostility against Him. "The world," He said to His foes, "cannot hate you but Me it hateth, because I protest of its works that they are evil." "If ye were of the world," He would say to His friends, "the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, therefore it hateth you." But this did not mean that He hated society, or loved to be

alone, or was in any sense solitary. On the contrary, He not only contrasted His attitude in this respect with that of the Baptist, for He came eating and drinking, mixing freely with men of every class ; but He longed to build up out of this hostile world a perfect society, the members of which should be bound together by mutual regard, and have only one rule, that of love and service. And from the very start of His mission He began to gather its members together, first binding them to Himself and then to one another. It was a singularly happy family consisting of men and women of very different associations and outlook, but so devoted to Him and, therefore, closely united to one another in Him, that the tie of fellowship was even stronger than that which existed in their own families. So began that wonderful movement which we call the Church of God. And, strange though it may seem, yet it is not untrue to say, that of all social organisations, whether political, intellectual or ethical, it deserves the strongest affection and the warmest regard. We wish that the author of *Ecce Homo* had entitled his famous chapter, "The Enthusiasm of the Church," instead of "The Enthusiasm of Humanity," for humanity apart from God has too little of hope about it to awaken enthusiasm. Extraordinarily interesting in its story and stirring the very depths of our nature by its tragedies and sorrows, yet it has no future

except so far as it is caught by the embrace of God through His Church. But the Church, though it contains much else, yet does number amongst its members the very best of all times and countries, and in what it has done for them in developing their beauty of character, assures us of what it may do for the rest.

For a picture of it we must, of course, go to the New Testament, and there find, not only what its ideal is, but how deeply and fervently He Who is the great head and leader of humanity cared for it. Wonderful descriptions are found in the New Testament which we find difficult to realise, such as "an habitation of God in the Spirit," the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, "The Temple of the Holy Ghost." Perhaps that which is most easy of interpretation is "The Body of Christ." It is true that the common use of these great words has robbed them of much of their power; they strike no fire, excite no emotions, and yet when they are lifted out of the rut of commonplace surroundings they become at once an inspiration and joy. For the Body of Christ in Galilean days stood for everything that was valued, whether physical healing, intellectual illumination, or spiritual power. Men pressed towards it, strove to touch it, gazed upon it, listened to it, and were extraordinarily happy if it came into their village. When it was transfigured in the Mount they wished to dwell

with it for ever, and when irradiated with the glory of the Resurrection they prostrated before it in loving wonder and awe. For the Body was Christ, and Christ was the Body.

Now, because the Church is His mystical and not His natural Body, it is not less real, less potent, less personally effective. The Body, indwelt by His Spirit, was not to have less of His Presence, but rather more. "I will come to you," was the promise. Nor was the power of the new Body to be inferior to that of the old. "Ye shall do greater works than these because I go to the Father." Nor was the teaching to be less full. On the contrary, whilst in the days of His flesh He had many things to say which He was not able at the time to mention ; the age of the Spirit was to be characterised by an ever-continual advancement into the realm of truth. "He will guide you into all the Truth." Nor would the old marvels connected with the physical Body cease, but be found in far greater abundance. His very last words assured them of that : "These signs shall follow them that believe. In My Name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

And all this because He and His Body are One, inseparably One. Christ is the Church.

The Church is Christ. We find this difficult. When we pray to Christ, or think of Him, we usually see Him as a glorious but yet a solitary Figure just as the pictures represent Him, sometimes on the Cross but alone ; sometimes on the Throne but alone. But, as a matter of fact, He is never alone. He is always the Heart of a vast redeemed Body, always the centre of ever-widening radiating circles of human spirits, like the calyx of a beautiful rose ; always the glorious Head that gives beauty, character, and understanding to a somewhat feeble Body, like the lofty spire and tower of some great Cathedral that binds all the humbler parts together. He is not the Lily standing erect amongst the flowers in its isolated purity, but the Vine which for its beauty and completeness depends on the branches, and so St Paul dares to say that not only are we perfected in Him, but He is perfected in the members of His Church.

Now this relationship is organic and real, formed through His creative as well as His redemptive grace, and sealed by His Blood ; it is not only bought by His precious Passion but permeated throughout by a love for which there is no earthly parallel. St Paul uses images to describe it. In one place he says the Church is to Christ what a man's body is to himself. The same care that is exercised in feeding, washing, resting, strengthening the

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body, a care that we never relax and that rises into sharp anxiety if there is anything wrong, is found in Christ's attachment to His Church. It is His daily and hourly thought. Or he compares it to the affection of a lover to his bride, who rejoices in her, thinks for her, sacrifices all for her, and does all he knows to add to her beauty and attractiveness. "So Christ," he says, "loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself as a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Men have loved their country, giving up everything for it as Garibaldi did; or died for it, as Abraham Lincoln; they have spent themselves and been gladly spent for their ideal women as Dante for Beatrice and Robert Browning for Elizabeth Barrett; but no patriot, however zealous, has loved his country as Christ loved the Church, and no lover, however ardent, has loved his bride as Jesus loves His Body. To human eyes it was a poor society full of infirmity and lacking every outward attraction, but to Christ it was as glorious as the golden candlestick which lighted the Holy Place was to the Jew, or as the stars shining in the clearness of an Eastern night were to the astronomer; and He was always in the midst. He had no illusions. He knew her weakness and her sinfulness. And He had the highest

ideals, but His attachment never varied, His hope never fainted. And this hope was shared by His earliest followers in the most discouraging circumstances.

II. HOW CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH MAY BE AWAKENED AND DEEPENED IN OURSELVES.—Now I am most anxious that you should learn to feel as our Lord felt; that the social temper which is a part of your nature should have for its supreme object the very best society, the Church of God; that what the State is to the patriot, and the city to the warm-hearted citizen, that the Church should be to you. At first, perhaps, it seems too big to awaken our enthusiasm. How can we ever know enough about it, stretching as it does all over the world and numbering over five hundred millions of people. So we think, and yet the British Empire has become very dear to millions of English people, and the Papacy to millions of Romanists. In both these cases the international barriers have to some extent been broken down, and a very real brotherhood felt and known between Easterns and Westerns, as well as between Indians, Africans, and English. And just now there is a widespread feeling amongst Socialists, as well as among the Labour people of every nation, that they must think and act together and, with a view to it, put aside all their race prejudices and insular feelings. There is something at fault, then, if we do not

feel this about the Catholic Church. We have gone some way: the sufferings of the Russian Church and the Armenians have aroused great sympathy, and there has been an endeavour to relieve the Christians of the East as though they were members of one family. But there is still a long distance to go. How can the way be eased and what part can you take in it?

We can first begin by realising the difference between the Church of God and all other societies or nations the world has known. They have produced clever men and also men of virtue in the old sense of the word, wise men also, but the Church has produced and does produce saints—that is her first claim upon our affection. “Compare the ancient with the modern world,” writes Professor Seely. “Look on this picture and on that. The broad distinction in the character of men forces itself into prominence. Among all the men of the ancient heathen world there were scarcely one or two to whom we might venture to apply the word ‘holy.’ In other words, there were not more than one or two, if any, who besides being virtuous in their actions were possessed with an unaffected enthusiasm of goodness, and besides abstaining from vice regarded even a vicious thought with horror. Probably no one will deny that in Christian countries this higher-toned goodness which we call holiness has existed. Few will maintain that it has been

exceedingly rare. Perhaps the truth is that there has scarcely been a town in any Christian country, since the time of Christ, where a century has passed without contributing a character of such elevation that his mere presence has shamed the bad and made the good better, and has been felt at times like the Presence of God Himself."

Now it is just these characters with which we must be familiar. We must know them and thank God for them. First begin with those of our own Church, our Scottish and English saints — Columba, Cuthbert, Aidan, Bertha, Margaret, and Hilda of early days, and Keble, Church, Florence Nightingale of later days, just to mention representative persons ; and then, if proceeding along the path Plato traced for us, we go from the love of one to the love of two, and from the love of two to the love of all, if we go to France and there acquaint ourselves with such saints as St Louis, St Martin, Joan of Arc, Francis de Sales, Fénelon ; and then to Italy with Francis of Assisi, Savonarola, Catherine of Siena, Carlo Borromeo ; and then to Spain with St Theresa, Ximenez, and Molinos ; and then to the east with the great names of the Apostles, and of saints like Athanasius, Chrysostom, and Augustine, we shall realise that as these are but representatives of an immense host of great people of singular beauty of character

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and self-sacrifice, of every profession and class of life, the Catholic Church of Christ has the highest testimony that any society can have—that of moral beauty.

But further, this is indefinitely extended by the saints we ourselves have known, and those who have in our own day won imperishable renown in the home or mission-fields of the Church, and we cry “What a society is here! What amazing fruitfulness! Hath He not made the barren woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children.”

“Shall not we love thee, Mother dear,  
Whom Jesus loves so well,  
And to His glory, year by year,  
Thy joy and honour tell.”

To catch this it is not sufficient to keep the black letter as well as the red letter saints; to be particular in having the virgin, confessor, doctor, martyr, marked by suitable hymns, but to have some real knowledge of those we commemorate, and to be ever adding to it those of our own generation, noting with special pride

“Of Sion it shall be reported that he was born in her  
And the Most High shall stablish her.”

But not only can the Church claim that peculiar glory which belongs to the great successes attained in the field of human character, but she can point to those great

moral advances which she has inspired, and which have led the world forward in its line of progress. It has been said that bishops and clergy have at times been found indifferent or even hostile to it; our profession, it is true, has not an unblemished record; but bishops and clergy do not make the Church, they are not the Church, and we must be careful to differentiate between their actions and those of the whole body. It is to the trend of the universal Church we look, not to the views of its leaders, princes, bishops, and the like; and as we look we see the extraordinary progress that liberty, morals, science, art, music, letters, have manifested in the two thousand years of her history. We turn in vain to India, China, or Japan, for these marks of advancement. The Church's record, then, is one of which she may well be proud. Never even in the darkest days has she been left without witness, but ever again and again some leader has appeared out of her midst and dared to rebuke the men and women of his generation for their hardness, oppression, bigotry, and wickedness. And so we acclaim her deeds and triumphs, and rejoice over her continued life against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

III. WHAT OUR LOVE WILL LEAD US TO ATTEMPT. — Having this conception of the Catholic Church, which happily in Paradise

has nothing to mar the complete fellowship all have one with another, we must face her present condition on earth and see what we can ourselves do to make it better.

Once she had the beauty of unity. All the images of Bride, Body, Temple, suggest that. There were divisions and heresies, but not of a character to split the Church and to prevent intercommunion. The Apostolic government was one, the priesthood was one, the faithful were one. Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch, and Jerusalem were in intimate fellowship. "See how these Christians love one another" was what the heathen said as they witnessed a charity which broke down the barriers of race, class, and sex. This unity had a compelling force on the outside world. We have lost it, but are seeking to recover it. Organically it is still one. So we say "I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church." But though one, because all His members wherever they may be and however they may call themselves are in Him, yet their lack of fellowship one with another which sometimes rises into hostility is a very serious stumbling-block, perhaps the most serious, to her witness in the world. And one of the happiest signs of our times is the desire everywhere expressed to have outward as well as inner unity. We must do all we can to encourage it. One step we can take at once. We can line up all the armies of

Christ's Church in battle array against intemperance, immorality, and corruption. If this were done there is not a social reform for the well-being of the State which would not have a fair chance of being carried. This would involve no suspicion, no insincerity, no pretence of believing what we do not hold, and would give a more common sense of unity than interchange of pulpits which, at best, only affects two congregations. It is not in that easy way that we shall gain the unity we desire, but by hard, brave thinking, and mutual consideration without pride in conference and discussion. This will take time, but that time may be well used in getting rid of all such social prejudices as still disfigure that common brotherhood we have in Christ. There is reason to believe that this recognition of social equality in Christ in Whom all inequalities disappear, will do more towards removing theological difficulties than anything else. Dr Parker of the City Temple told a friend that it was the sense of social inferiority which churchmen sometimes consciously or unconsciously gave ministers that was most active in promoting division. Happily that is disappearing, and when it is gone the temper in which questions of the ministry will be discussed will be vastly improved.

IV. FELLOWSHIP AND SOCIAL REFORM.—But this enthusiasm for the Church with its creative

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power in making saints, its reconstructive power in making society, would soon evaporate unless it is brought down into actual contact with the conditions of its present-day environment. We will praise the Church and thank God for her, but we cannot help seeing that she is so entangled with the world that men accuse her for what they find in the world, and praise the world for what they find in her. Christianity, a civilised heathenism, is one of the taunts that is levelled at her. And it is not easy to be insensible to its bitterness. For this Church of the Saints, as seen in our great city, seems like a comfortable house in the slums, or a West End club in Canongate. Round it on all sides are those who are by virtue of their Baptism members of it, and yet "so crowded in their dwellings that decency is impossible, so insufficiently fed that they cannot be efficient workers with body or mind; so hopeless and joyless in home life that drink and gambling and immoral pleasures present irresistible attractions." These are they who, though members, are outside the Church, whilst inside there may be those who have shares in an organised liquor traffic that decimates bodies and souls; those, who like Dives, are entirely indifferent to the Lazarus that is outside their gates; and those who, completely engrossed in commercial affairs for six days out of seven, are giving an atmosphere of unreality to all the services they attend.

The Church that stirred our loyal enthusiasm seems in the face of these embarrassing facts a failure where it ought to succeed. Both within and without it finds but little justification for its noble profession. So men, in recoil from what seems to them unreal, leave its service in order to dedicate themselves entirely to social reform. They quote the classical saying, "Without maintenance virtue is impossible," and urge that we must therefore press for good wages, better housing, and intelligent education, and had better leave religion alone. The Church, in spite of her services and sermons, seems to be powerless. We know that it is through the members of the Church, such as Wesley, Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, Howard, that reforms have come to the State. Yet there is enough truth behind it to cause anxious questioning as to whether the Church is to count herself hopelessly beaten in practical life, or only ignorant of the great resources which she has at command. What, then, can be done?

First, there must be knowledge. When I was in London there was a widespread feeling amongst those who were leaders in social service, that the Church should hand over all relief of the poor to the C.O.S. Bureaux that were established in various parts of South London. She was felt to be still working on the old lines of charity, which had encouraged

deceit and robbed people of the little independence they had. The proposal was tempting, but to yield to it would have been to separate the Gospel of Christ from one of its most convincing evidences. We should then allow it to be said that the Church cared nothing for man's material, only for his spiritual, interests. Sky pilots would have been the deserved title of those whose only concern was the soul. The example of Christ would have been robbed of half its value. For He was emphatically "the Saviour of the body." The Church can never abdicate from the privileged position it has had from the beginning of caring for the poor. But this must be done efficiently, with all the scientific care and accuracy the best C.O.S. Office can provide; and in close connection with their highly trained work, having as the Secretary of its Relief Committee one who is well versed in their methods. The Church, then, is able to combine the two needs which ought never to be separated, those of the soul and body. She can give what no C.O.S. body can, a definite, clear faith that may re-animate and encourage the spirit of workless people: she can point to One Who knew and knows their poverty, and is anxious to relieve it. This needs skill and discernment, but, as we found in Lambeth, it is not impossible. It is only patchwork if we find a man work without telling him how he may find the spirit to do it. Now,

no elaborate knowledge of economics is necessary for the parson in order to become a good chairman of a Relief Committee. If he masters a good handbook on charitable relief, experience will teach him the rest. It is quite different if he wishes to take part in the wider discussions of the subject which involve the difficult questions of wages, relations of capital to labour, unemployment, etc. It is perilous to adventure on these perplexing problems unless he has a very ample time at his disposal ; and it is hard to see how any but the very few who are specially circumstanced can find time for it, if they are doing the other more important parts of their priestly duty efficiently. Preaching, teaching, visiting, and taking part in the ministrations of the Church leave no margin for such a study of economics as would make us social leaders. But enough can be done, directly or indirectly, through workers, to make it perfectly clear that no one has the needs and the sufferings of the poor more at heart than the Vicar and Rector, and none more anxious than he to push forward such reforms as the better housing of the poor and the improvement of public houses loudly calls for. He will be wise if he abstains from taking sides in politics, but now and again his zeal against intemperance, immorality, and gambling, may force him to advocate publicly some suggested solution of a vexed and difficult problem. In any case,

we must make it clear that Christianity is a life, not a creed only ; and that the Church is really on its trial. Can it or can it not grapple with the evils of a commercial and industrial age and nation ? We clergy cannot, as Canon Wilson says, accept the present relation of classes as according with the mind of Christ. "We must resist selfish individualism, and if we are not prepared to accept Socialism as a political and economical programme for reform, that must only be because we insist no less than Socialists on brotherhood and mutual service as an all-pervading voluntary principle in business transactions as in all domestic relations. . . . The world is crying out for a new type of Christian, ardent in faith and love to his Master, and therefore devoting himself whether in or out of Holy Orders as Christ did to bearing and healing the infirmities of others." The Church must answer the call, but she can only do it effectually if, like her great Leader, she makes it quite clear that the love of God with all the heart, the mind, the soul, and the strength, comes first. This has not always been obvious in those who have engaged in this work in later days, though the pioneers, like Maurice and Kingsley, never allowed any doubt of that kind to rest on their work for the people. "You cannot," in the words of the noblest leader of modern democracy, "change the fate of man by embellishing his material dwelling." We must

touch the soul if we are to change the mode of living. There is no danger that the Church should forget this, her danger lies in indifference to the facts of life as our great cities reveal them. She must redeem her good name, and through manifold acts of service attract to her the enthusiasm and zeal of those who, through misunderstanding, have mistaken her aims. I think there are clear signs that she is coming into her heritage. That Bishop Westcott was able to intervene successfully in the Durham miners' strike and find an award that satisfied both masters and men: that the Bishop of Manchester should be leading men of all denominations to consider how Christianity can influence the industrial forces of the country and permeate them with her principles: and that the clergy and laity of the Church are freely discussing in their councils what steps should be taken to secure the best education for the poorest, a decent home for the most needy, and a living wage for all the workers, are all signs that the Church is recognising, under modern conditions, that same claim which, in the Middle Ages, fired the hearts of St Francis of Assisi and St Vincent de Paul.

Having her reputation in constant remembrance, and perpetually anxious that her fair name should suffer no reproach, you will endeavour to follow the example of her great Head—(1) By caring for the bodies of your

people, and seeing that they are relieved by the offerings in the Church. Those given at Holy Communion are allocated for that purpose. (2) By resolutely opposing all those evils which prey upon their lives. Now and again you may have to face a malicious public opinion created by those who wish to keep things as they are, but you will not hesitate. (3) By living simply and sociably, and giving a glad welcome to all who seek the hospitality of your house. In this way the poor learn to share your love for the Church. It is not untrue to say that Father Dolling changed the whole mind of St Saviour's, Poplar, as Dean Hook the whole mind of Leeds, in their relation to the Church. Both saw her as a living expression of an ever-present Lord, and felt towards her much as the Galilean disciples towards the Body of the Lord.

Lastly, though the hostility of the world must not be provoked it must be steadily faced. It is still true that "the world hateth Me because I protest of its works that they are evil." We don't like to think this, for we all know men and women of the world who are friendly, interesting, and kind hearted. But there are three subjects on which they allow no criticism—tradition, money, and marriage. The old family traditions are sacrosanct and must not be disturbed. What their fathers did is not only good enough for them, but the law

and the testimony. Church hours that conflict with those that have been handed down as sacred to the great events of dinner and breakfast may be suitable to others, but are ruled out as impossible for themselves. Subjects that are freely talked of when in the drawing-room and smoking-room, and very freely discussed in the novels that lie on the table for all to read, are not to be referred to in the pulpit. Money at once betrays the real hostility that the world has for Christ. It is unkind to ask for it, and an offence to suggest that to sacrifice it is the necessary expression of the Christian life; whilst to press home the difficulty that the rich have in entering the Kingdom of God is to attack their character. Do it with what tact you may you can hardly bear faithful witness on the sin of covetousness without the risk of turning a friend into a hostile critic. But, perhaps, of all questions that of sex is the subject to which the world is most sensitive. The law of the land supplies their standard, and it is insufferable that any society should dare to condemn it. That the Christian Church should bar to communion those whom the law has made one, because of the divorce which the Court has given is a daring invasion of home rights, and must not be tolerated. And yet the Church is only worthy of our regard if she keeps the principles which have been hers from the beginning.

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Her moral laws have been made for her by Him who founded her, and from these she cannot depart.

So our love and loyalty must not suffer because now and again she is the subject of bitter hostility. Those are the times when she makes progress amongst those who are seeking a clear path in morals as in faith. Hard things may be said of her and her mistakes may be exaggerated, but she is the Body of Christ, and by her we must stand specially when her witness is challenged.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Equipment

THE map of our life has now been spread out before us. We see its opportunities and possibilities. But we see also its great dangers. For this Ministry concerns not only ourselves and those to whom we minister, but Him Whose commissioned servants we are. His honour, reputation, and even success largely depend upon us, for though true of others, it is specially true of His priests that—

“Christ has no hand but our hands to do His work to-day ;

He has no feet but our feet to lead men in His way ;  
He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died ;

He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.  
We are the only Bible the careless world will read ;  
We are the sinner’s Gospel, we are the scoffer’s creed ;  
We are the Lord’s last message given in deed and word.

What if the type be crooked ?

What if the print be blurred ?

What if our hands are busy with other work than His ?  
What if our feet are walking where sin’s allurement is ?  
What if our tongues are speaking of things His lips would spurn ?

How can we hope to help Him and hasten His return ? ”

What if these things happen ? There lies the risk, not only of failure in ourselves, but failure to that cause with which we are so

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closely identified, which is His cause. Would it not be safer to eschew such dangers and content ourselves with something more safe, where the likelihood of injury would be less serious. It was St Vincent de Paul, one who attained greater heights than we are likely to reach, who yet said, "Had I realised the tremendous difficulties and responsibilities of the pastoral office I would have chosen any other calling." And yet we ask again, "Could we have chosen any other calling?" Doubts, perplexities, and questionings of this kind force us to throw ourselves back upon our Call. We do believe, at least so we said twice, when we were ordained to the Diaconate and the Priesthood, that we are truly called to the Order and Ministry we serve, and if called, not only must we obey, but we may be certain that all that is necessary for our equipment will be supplied, that our resources will be adequate. That was so with the disciples when they returned after their first mission. Christ asked, "When I sent you forth, lacked ye anything?" They said, "Nothing." Every want had been met, every circumstance provided for, every difficulty overcome, every perplexity relieved. They had lacked nothing. And our experience will be the same if our faith be the same.

But our faith, if it is to meet with "this sufficiency which is of God not of ourselves," must be continually examined lest some influ-

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ence be getting at it and reducing its capacity. For faith is a delicate plant, very susceptible to atmosphere and easily injured. It is not that easy expression of optimism which has no real basis, not that childish credulity which accepts everything that is told it without examination. It is no simple activity of the mind or the spirit, but rather a complex harmony of reason and feeling and purpose. It is, to use Bishop Westcott's definition, "thought illuminated by emotion and concentrated by will." It is, then, a quality which for its character depends on the mind, the body, and the spirit. It is thought, and therefore contingent on the sane condition of the mind; and it is also thought illuminated by emotion, that is, thought warmed by the felt experiences of the spirit; further, it is thought concentrated by will, *i.e.* thought expressed in action, and therefore controlled by the activities of the body. It is the harmony of the interplay of mind, body, and spirit. It will be well, then, to think simply and directly about the exercise and training of these three inseparable parts of our nature that make up man. Doubts, hesitations, and perplexities are generally due to some failure in one or other of these respects. The body is not controlled, or the mind is allowed to be fallow, or we are dreamy, indolent, making no practical effort, and so faith is feeble. We need self-discipline, training of the mind, and spiritual exercise.

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I. CONSECRATION.—But first, beyond all these, there must be the one comprehensive motive that underlies all that which lay at the foundation of our Lord's life, and therefore must be the basis of ours—I mean self-sacrifice. That was the thought expressed in those ever memorable words, “For their sakes I sanctify myself that they may be sanctified in truth”—*i.e.* really sanctified. This means that Christ voluntarily consecrated every part of His life for the sake of the Apostles and the great Church of God behind them, that they might be entirely consecrated. His self-surrender in everything, knowing no exception, had the Apostles in view. It was “for their sakes” He longed to see them self-controlled, obedient, and devoted, and so He set them an example. So, too, we, knowing and loving our people, longing to see them perfect in every Christian grace, and willing in every good work, set ourselves earnestly to sacrifice every selfish inclination, and to bring into subjection every rebellious thought. We give ourselves absolutely to God for their sakes. As to what this means, read and think over these words of Bishop Paget, spoken some twenty-five years ago, not to priests, but to a meeting of Public School masters: “There (that is, in the words, ‘For their sakes I consecrate myself’) is the ultimate secret of power, the one sure way of doing good in our generation. We cannot

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anticipate or analyse the power of a pure, holy life ; but there can be no doubt about its reality, and there seems no limit to its range. We can only know in part the laws and forces of the spiritual world, and it may be that every soul that is purified and given up to God and to His work releases or awakens energies of which we have no suspicion, energies viewless as the wind, but we can be sure of the result, and we may have glimpses sometimes of the process. Surely, there is no power in the world so unerring or so irrepressible as the power of personal holiness. All else at times goes wrong, blunders, loses proportion, falls disastrously short of its aim, grows stiff or one-sided or out of date . . . but nothing mars or misleads the influence that issues from a pure, humble, and unselfish character. A man's gifts may lack opportunity, his efforts may be misunderstood and resisted ; but the spiritual power of a consecrated will needs no opportunity, and can enter where the doors are shut. By no faults of a man's own his gifts may suggest to some the thoughts of criticism, comparison, competition ; his self-consecration can do no harm in this way. ' For their sakes I consecrate myself ! ' I shall never forget the emphasis with which these words were left ringing through my mind by the Bishop of Durham in an address which he gave to some of us at Cuddesdon. Ever since they have

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seemed to me to mark one's highest—no, one's only—hope of not failing utterly in such a trust as God has given you and me. 'For their sakes'—for the sake of those whom God has set me to teach and guide; for the sake of those on whom, whether I wish it or no, whether I am conscious of it or unconscious, my life must tell; for the sake of my pupils, for the sake of my home—'I consecrate myself.'"

II. THE BODY.—Well, there it is—and how shall I begin? Let us begin where St Paul begins, in those wonderful chapters of self-consecration in his Epistle to the Romans. "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." "Your body," that is obviously the first subject to control and make adaptable for God's perfect service. For let us first be clear that body, mind, and spirit form a Unity, that each is dependent on the other, and that if we are to be what we wish, all must be perfectly related to one another. If the body is weak, the mind and spirit are also weak. It is this that Psychologists tell us. "Few realise," writes one, "how impossible healthful energy of will is without strong muscles which are its organ, or how endurance and self-control, no less than great achievement, depend on muscle habits." Some specialists speak even more strongly, when they "write" of the whole

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character being changed by a slight attack of cerebral congestion. It seems to be quite true from experience that if a man is tired it is more difficult to be decent—that “exhaustion of nervous energy always lessens the inhibitory powers,” *i.e.* the powers of control and self-restraint. Bishop Wilkinson would always notice that the clergy at supper on Sunday evening were much more likely to say things they should not say, and this because they were tired. The postman can tell far more accurately in the morning than at night the weight of a letter, and the parson more truly the meaning of its contents after his bath in the morning than late at night. Surely a good reason for answering our letters early whilst our judgment is sound. Remember fatigue, often unavoidable, is intellectually and morally dangerous, and we are bound to avoid it so far as we can, but when burdened by it we must at once call in the special aid of the Spirit, that we may be lifted above it and not make mistakes or be a prey to misunderstandings. If we become permanently tired, then a couple of days in the country or a day in bed may set us right, and prevent that feeling of boredom the fruitful parent of so many parochial troubles.

But not only are we to be careful in avoiding fatigue, but in refusing to yield to an easy indulgence in food, drink or tobacco. Sydney Smith,

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no doubt, exaggerated when he said, "I am convinced that digestion is the great secret of life, and that character, talents, virtues and qualities are powerfully affected by beef, mutton, piecrust and rich soups," but there is profound truth in the exaggeration. Livery and bilious thinking are no figment of the imagination, but a physiological fact. The slightest bodily affection will sometimes give a turn to our reflections. It has been said that we think differently when we are lying down and when we are standing up ; a constrained or cramped position of the body has a depressing effect upon the spirits. Rage is quieted by muscular repose, and it is a dictate of prudence to get an angry man to sit down in an easy chair. If such a slight change affects our reasoning, much more do the entrance into our physical system of unwholesome foods or narcotic drugs. The lives of De Quincey, Coleridge, Carlyle and many others are warnings of the mischief that comes from self-indulgence, and of the need of that prayer before meals that asks that God may bless our food for our use as well as ourselves for His service. We live in easy-going days when the tables of artisan and professional people are alike well supplied ; we need, therefore, to take the more earnest heed that we do not spoil or coarsen our spiritual sense by too much regard for the satisfaction of our earthly appetites. There is no fear lest we become

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ascetics, that is not a danger of our time, but lest we become slaves of the table !

All this is not in principle new to the student of the Bible. There, again and again, we are warned as to the importance of the Body. "The Body," writes St Paul, "is the Temple of the Holy Ghost," the outward shrine of a Personal Presence that breathes through each part of it. It has for its purpose consecration to Jesus Christ. "The Body is for the Lord," and in some mysterious way difficult to fathom the Lord is for the Body. So St Paul kept it well under, often using forcible measures.

Bearing all this in mind we must take pains to see that the body is as fit as possible, not merely in health but plus-health. One day off in the week for golf, walk, or exercise ; wholesome food and not too much of it ; good rest at night and regular habits ; all these are essential, especially the latter, for we ought to be as prudent in our methodical ways as the artisan or clerk or man of business, beginning our work at a set time and continuing it for such time as our conscience and the demands of our day insist.

At some time, as is the case in every profession, we shall be pressed and may have to work far on into the night, but these are exceptional. It is best to plan out our day in the evening before, so that we may have all clear before us when we rise. Fast days are a

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wholesome check on the natural greed of the body, and an admirable discipline of our unruly natures. It does not matter much what rules we lay down for their observance, but what is of importance is that, from time to time, we should restrain our appetites deliberately even from things expedient. The number of these days, if we take the Vigils, is large, and our observance of them is a very good exercise of the will. And whilst we are able to maintain our freedom and say "all things are lawful for me," yet we must also be careful to maintain our self-respect and say, "I will not be brought under the power of any." Self-control and self-reverence are twin virtues. In these days it is probably best to be total abstainers, as we shall find men from time to time who are making wrecks of their lives through use of alcohol, but if we are such it is for the sake of our neighbour. It is not unnecessary to say all this. Experience would suggest that as a profession we are more open to attacks of self-indulgence than others. Considering the sheltered lives we lead, and the restraining power of *noblesse oblige*, it is humiliating to think that any of those consecrated to be ministers and stewards of God's mysteries should ever succumb to temptations of the flesh. But History warns us. This danger is partly due to the exhausting character of the work when seriously undertaken, and partly to the dark clouds of depression which frequent disappointments bring. The

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reactions which fatigue, defeat and failure suggest are terrible temptations to the tired man, and once yielded to quickly become an obsession. And the very kindness and social hospitality of our people has its own dangers to the undisciplined. That happy feeling of freedom which enables us to go where we will without comment or criticism, and the proper absence of conventionality which encourages an open manner, bring difficulties of their own. It is true that people like us to be easy with them, as it enables them to talk without reserve. But all this with the constant excitation of our emotional and artistic natures through services which ought to kindle or fan the spiritual fire within us, but sometimes have another effect, make the priestly life a prey to temptation. It is not always easy to draw the line between friendliness and familiarity, between affection and intimacy, and therefore the priest more than anyone else needs to be continually learning the habit of self-control, so that he never spoils the high traditions of his Church and office, nor abuses that freedom which is one of the privileges of his profession. Women and girls, where their affection is engaged, are quick to respond and sometimes to imagine that more is meant than is intended. We cannot then be too careful in always remembering the high dignity of our calling, and the need that through the body, as well as the mind and spirit, we do not hinder but rather help

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forward the Kingdom of God. St Paul goes so far as to bid the Corinthians "glorify God in their body." To do this means to add to His beauty and His Majesty by the use we make of our body, so that our walk and manner and whole bodily frame and setting should be a witness to His Glory within us, just as the clouds, flowers, and creatures are to His Presence within them. But this is only possible if the body is so susceptible to the spirit within it that it readily expresses His Glory in every movement. The body of Moses showed the effect of his spirit's activity during the long retreat of six weeks. And in a still fuller measure the Transfiguration of Christ revealed the same effect of the spirit over the body. "As He was praying the fashion of His countenance was altered." "His face did shine as the sun, His raiment became white and dazzling." The glory of His Spirit flashed through the earthly material vesture and changed it. These are, of course, extreme illustrations, but those who live near to God and in whom His Spirit operates do still show to-day, as the faces of men like Maurice, Trench, Bishops King, Wilkinson and Westcott showed, not the attenuated mask of asceticism but the glory of a bright light within, irradiating the whole countenance and pointing as clearly to the future Resurrection of the Body as the unity of body, mind and spirit.

III. THE MIND.—For the earthly body in

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its last analysis is more spiritual than we suppose. It is not the tough, hard flesh and bones it seems to be, but a chemical product extraordinarily susceptible to the mind which really fashions it.

Now as to a certain extent it is made by the food we eat, even more truly may it be said that that aspect of it with which we are most familiar is fashioned by the books we read. "We are two men," Bishop Steere used to say, "the seen and the unseen, and the unseen is the maker of the seen." And yet we take even less account of those outward things, such as books, pictures, colours that make thought, than we do of the meats and drinks that make muscle. Slowly and imperceptibly the careless priest is being changed by his reading. After some years, it may be, he wonders how it is that his outlook, his estimate of values, his measure of events, is so different from what it was. He has done nothing, he says, to make this great change, he cannot remember being directly influenced by speaker or book, but he knows he is different and his friends know it. He has lost something. The old intuition on which he used to rely has gone, that sureness of touch of the things unseen has departed, he feels that he is spiritually coarser, with less belief in prayer, less appreciation of the Sacraments and very infrequent visions of Truth. He blames his circumstances, it may be his isolation, or it may

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be the opposite, his crowded life. But really the change is due to haphazard reading which has fashioned his thinking. Yet he was never conscious of reading foolish or bad things. He read what other people read and nothing else, and so has become like other people in spite of his dress, which suggests that he has or ought to have a clearer and a wider vision. Now to avoid this calamity we must exercise as much care over the ordering of our intellectual food as our housekeeper does over that of our physical food.

We must, in spite of the temptation which curiosity induces, keep clear of all books, pictures, and music that have a deteriorating influence, avoid all suggestions that make human nature cheap and nasty, and, on the contrary, encourage our minds to dwell on "whatever things are honourable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are holy, whatever things are of good report ; and if there be any virtue and if there be any praise to think on these things." That was St Paul's advice, and we cannot do better than follow it. But such a survey as he suggests is, in the vast accumulation of literary treasures, not easy to make. To keep touch with the best modern literature is difficult. I well remember that at the close of a brilliant address on this subject by Bishop Potter of New York, who was well read in the best poetry and

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thought of his time, one of the clergy present asked how it was to be done with the claims of other things. "Get up early, my son," was the reply. But this, apt though it was, does not remove all the difficulty. The choice of the best books, in order that our minds may be well stored, is becoming increasingly difficult. Every year the output of historical, romantic, and poetical literature is beyond the power of most clergy to become familiar with, and yet we do not like to be behind the best of our congregation. What test can we propose to enable us to make a good selection?

Archbishop Benson put in the forefront of his little book for Ordination candidates, called *Vigilemus*, these words of St Bernard, which distinguish between the true and false aims of study :—

"Sunt namque qui scire volunt eo fine tantum ut sciant; et turpis curiositas est. Et sunt qui scire volunt ut sciantur ipsi; et turpis vanitas est. Et sunt item qui scire volunt ut scientiam suam vendant e.g. pro pecunia, pro honoribus, et turpis quæstus est. Et item qui scire volunt ut ædificantur; et prudentia est."

If we are wise and follow along this path then we shall seek, primarily, that knowledge which makes for character. We shall put aside all that is prompted by mere curiosity or pride. But even then the amount is seriously large. It may be well, therefore, to go back to our

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Ordination promise and confine ourselves to such studies—and the field then will be sufficiently large—as help to the knowledge of God.

(a) *Knowing God*.—This must be the object of all your thinking. For this means not only increased intellectual vitality to which all friendship witnesses, but a vitality that covers the whole nature. “This is the unchanging life,” our Lord said, “to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent,” and for this St Paul was quite willing to sacrifice all he had, whether money, position, or health. “I count all things but loss for the excellency,” *i.e.* the surpassing worth, “of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord.” Therefore, it must hold absolutely the first place. “This one thing I do” must, then, be our motto.

Now in having one great end and purpose to our thinking, we are surely adopting a principle widely acknowledged. Lord Riddell is only speaking out of a wide experience when he says: “In these days no one can achieve distinction unless he concentrate on some one thing,” and he quotes Sydney Smith’s advice, “Have the courage to be ignorant of a great many things in order to avoid the calamity of being ignorant of everything.” So, too, Browning teaches with even more truth, “Who keeps *one end* in view all things serve.” I urge you, then, to make the knowledge of God your main concern. See that you concentrate

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on that, for though the way is definite and clearly marked, so that those who give themselves to it are sometimes spoken of as narrow-minded, yet it really covers all things, and brings within its sphere all that is beautiful in thought and expression. So Drama, Art, Music, Philosophy, all minister to the great goal it serves. And in a sense none are so versatile as those who know God. Directly we become interested in a man we are interested in all that he has—his home, business, and recreations; so when we begin to know God we at once begin to care in a new way for Nature, Literature, etc., for all are from Him. “Who keeps one end in view all things serve.”

And this end of which I am speaking gives to all knowledge just that sense of personality which prevents it from being mere abstract thought. History is a revelation of His acts; philosophy and poetry are aspects of His mind; science of His wisdom; and human life of His love and care. And He Who is behind all and in all is He Whom we seek.

(b) *Studying the Bible*.—But how are we to approach such a vast subject. Mainly through the Bible. That supplies the key to that personal fellowship which is real life. It tells us of this in the far-off ages long before Christianity. It tells us of this concretely and specially in the Incarnation of God in Christ, and we must find it and make it our own. This is not easy.

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The letter, *i.e.* the outward visible sign, is sometimes defective and inaccurate, perhaps designedly so, that we may not make an idol of it—and, this is the main disadvantage, it is very familiar. We have been so long accustomed to the sound of the words without attaching any particular meaning to them that, to use a common expression, they cut no ice. We have, therefore, not only to exercise our minds with great diligence that we distinguish between what is transitory and eternal, what belongs to the time when the record was written and that which belongs to every age, but also to get the thought which lies behind the word. So only may we spiritually discern the mind of God. No hasty reading will suffice, we need time, concentration and hard thinking. No meditation will be of much value without them.

Now, for concentration we first need prayer to the Spirit Who loves an ordered mind and hates confusion. Do we not see this in His works of Nature where everything, whether in the crust of the earth, the growth of a flower so beautifully arranged, or the ordering of the human mind, tends towards a Unity? He will help us, then, to be clear and intelligent, and to focus our minds. But we must co-operate and not fear hard work. For most people the method of taking a passage of Scripture and thinking it over, whilst kneeling or sitting, is not very happy in results. The mind will

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wander. Thoughts of what we are going to do, or what we have done, intrude and crowd in, and the main impression is dull and vague. Something more is necessary — something definite and practical. Lord Riddell suggests that method which, after the experience of thirty years, I know to be so helpful. After describing various plans for securing concentration, he writes, "Another and more generally useful method is to read a paragraph in a scientific book, such as Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and then to attempt to reproduce the contents in writing, not verbatim but in our own words. When you find that you can do that successfully, you can try to reproduce the contents of a page and then of a chapter. But a task of this sort cannot be performed satisfactorily unless the result of your work is checked by some one upon whose judgment you can rely." Let us apply this wise advice to meditation. Take a paragraph from one of the Epistles, reproduce it from the Greek in your own words, not allowing one word of the Authorised Version or the Revised Version to find place, then compare the result with the translation of Dr Weymouth or Dr Moffatt, seeing where you are wrong and why. By this time your mind will be full of the thought of God that lies behind the words, and your next duty will be to make clear how that applies to the life and work of to-day. For it

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is the same Spirit that spake then who speaks now, and it is His judgment that you are considering. Only, in order to make that clear, you must separate the thought from all that is local and transitory in the words. For this you must bear in mind, when, by whom and to whom the words were written, and taking into account the great differences which distinguish that situation from the one you know, fasten your mind on that which is eternal, the unchanging truth of God. This mental discipline you will find most valuable. The study of words will teach you accuracy, the knowledge of the facts that lie behind them will teach you history, and the endeavour to faithfully reproduce the thought of the writer will teach you reasoning. You will find that the mind will be braced, your power of expression enlarged, and your interest in the Bible greatly stimulated. Your mind has served you not as a wallet, but as a living organ, and your meditation will issue in the robust reality of a quickened consciousness of the personality of God and His relation to you. "For," as Bishop Westcott says, "in each word we listen for some accent of the Divine Speaker. As He wrought in old times He works still; as He spoke in old times He speaks still. The Bible is not merely the Charter of our Faith, written in a language obsolete and only half intelligible, but a message of the Living God to struggling

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men. Through this—illuminated by every ray of truth which can be gathered from every source—He shows Himself to us."

In recommending this daily study of the mind of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, I am following the experience of those who have been the creative forces of their own generation. The present Archbishop of York writes out of a wide experience:—"I know of no powerful effective ministry that is not based upon a full knowledge of the Word of God. Every priest who has left his mark has been a servant of the Word." Of Bishop Selwyn it was said that he was the man of one Book, and that the Bible. Frederic Robertson, we know, literally learned by heart the whole of the New Testament, not only in English but in Greek; and spent a world of study, of reverent meditation, of adoring contemplation on the gospel history. Bishop Wilkinson's supreme interest, surpassing all other, was the Bible, and what was said of Robertson was equally true of him. "His love for the Holy Bible was exceedingly remarkable and especially for those parts that are full of Christ." So, too, Newman, Maurice, Liddon, Pusey, show by their letters and sermons that they were living expressions of wonderful devotion to the Bible.

One further thought occurs in this connection. Bible study doubtless brings great advantages,

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but does it not raise more questions than it solves? The great fundamental truths of the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, with all their implications in the Church and the Sacraments, are, as we know, viewed very differently by men of equal ability and scholarship. For any parish priest, with a necessarily small margin of time and without the scholar's training, to embark on the open sea of controversy is to produce that uncertain, hesitating attitude which is as troublesome to his congregation as to himself. So the Church has provided us with a short statement of these things most surely believed amongst us in the Nicene and Apostles' Creed, repeated throughout the Christian world as her standards of doctrine. They contain, as it were, the axioms by use of which we find the truth of the Bible. In the words of Bishop Westcott: "Such a summary . . . presents to us the salient features in the revelation which earlier experience has proved to be turning-points of spiritual knowledge. It offers centres, so to speak, round which we may group our thoughts, and to which we may refer the lessons laid open to us. It keeps us from wandering in by-paths aimlessly or at our will, not by fixing arbitrary limits to inquiry, but by marking the great lines along which believers have moved from the first. . . . It is the knowledge 'to which,' as St Paul says, 'we

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have been delivered,' that it may mould and keep us, body, soul and spirit, until the day of the Lord." And this Creed is illustrated by the liturgies and services of the Church. It is important then that we do all our thinking within its ample limits, get rid of our narrowness in its largeness, and of our prejudices in its judgments. It is, of course, true that such convictions as it expresses can only become ours by experience. They are tested by life before they pass from the intellectual into the spiritual sphere. We must be patient.

There will be a natural desire to reach out to those who, from various causes, are unable to accept all the statements of the Creed, who stumble over the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection. You will not best help them by suggesting that you do not think them important. That will only be to them a gesture of doubt as to whether you believe any truth is important, whether Divine Revelation is not simply happy guess work. To them you seem to be uncertain, and if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound who will prepare himself for the battle, who will find it worth while to endure the Cross or make the great Renunciation which discipleship involves.

IV. THE SPIRIT.—But this training of the mind leads us on, naturally, to the discipline and education of the spirit. For this, something

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more is needed than the development of the mind. The outstanding feature of the life of the New Testament is the awakening and growth of the spirit, and nothing quite parallel to it has happened since. The New Testament is the evidence for that marked and unsurpassed vitality. But though we cannot attain to the ideal we must do our best to reach forward to it. We must exercise the spirit as we do the mind and the body. It has its own dangers, well known in the meetings of the first Christians, where licence was thrown to the winds, and men and women shouted or sang in such a wild way that St Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, reminds those attending Christian worship that the spirit of the prophets must be subject to the prophets, controlled and ordered. And again and again, as amongst the Montanists of early and the Irvingites of later days, strange scenes have been witnessed attesting the activity of the spirit and the possibility of its breaking bonds. There is no danger of such irregular expression of the spirit's force with us: the danger with us is that to which St Paul refers, in his letter to the Thessalonians, of quenching the Spirit, of putting out that fire of Divine love and burning enthusiasm which has always been the moving power of the Saints of God in their battle with the world.

We live in days when both body and mind dominate spirit to such an extent that it

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scarcely has any opportunity of expressing itself, and where it does its witness is condemned. And yet our best thinkers have always felt that we should be in a poor way without its help. Again and again, when the intellect in its pride has insisted that all things in heaven and earth must be measured by its logic, the spirit within us has made its protest. It is no isolated experience that Tennyson describes in the well-known lines :—

“If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,  
I heard a voice ‘Believe no more,’  
A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason’s colder part,  
And like a man in wrath, the heart  
Stood up and answered, ‘I have felt.’”

And it is the Dean of St Paul’s, who is not likely to underrate the power of the intellect, who tells us that “it is a difficult question whether rationalism,” *i.e.* positive knowledge, “has much place in the life of faith, except in checking the exuberance of religious imagination.” “I think myself,” he writes, “that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ can be certainly known only as the reward of a life of faith and discipline. . . . It is not the logical faculty but the spirit in love which finds in experience that God Whom Christ came to reveal.” And yet he acknowledges that but few will be led to believe this, not, perhaps,

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because they have so much trust in the intellect, but because they have so little trust in the spirit. "The world of spirit is unreal," they say, "and it is a waste of time to explore it." "But that may be," replies the Dean, "because you have given so little time to it. If we spend sixteen hours of our waking life in thinking about the affairs of this world and about five minutes in thinking of God and our own souls, why should we not expect this world to be about two hundred times more real to us than God or our soul. . . . It is quite true that some are more religiously gifted than others, and their spirits are naturally more alive, and they have more of the mystic sense, but our own weakness in that particular ought only to make us the more eager to develop what we have, whether it be two talents or only one. Before you make up your mind that you are spiritually short-sighted you must give the Holy Spirit, or rather yourselves, a fair chance. You do not give Him or yourselves a fair chance unless you determine to perform frequently what are called acts of faith."

(a) *Acts of Faith*.—With the priest there is no difficulty in finding abundant opportunities for these. Parts of speech, declensions, conjugations must be mastered before we can go safely forward in Latin or Greek, so acts of faith, ejaculations, short expressions of praise, verses of hymns ought to become a natural

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expression of our spirit life. It is well to remember that our Lord was brought up as a child in the devotional atmosphere of the Jewish church. Doubtless He had often heard in synagogue and temple what we may hear in church, unmeaning recitations of the Psalms. He loved, and, therefore, when speaking about prayer, urged His disciples against using vain repetitions. We must, therefore, be careful and see that the Psalms become the real expressions of our own personal faith. As with Christ's personal use they were mainly Intercessions for His Body, so with us they ought to serve the same purpose. If we are alive to the necessities of the whole Church, that part of it which is just now passing through such a terrible trial of persecution in Russia, as well as those parts which, through affliction or poverty in the mission-field, are feeble, we shall find no difficulty in making them the intelligent expressions of the spirit. And though it is more easy to use the Christian hymns, yet you should watch narrowly whether those you select are real acts of faith and love or only what we call popular hymns, dear to us through their tunes. Probably neither the body nor the mind suffer so much from conventionality as the spirit. Every injury we do to its sincerity is far-reaching, insensibly altering our whole religious outlook.

(b) *Silent Communing*.—But having said all

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this, it is well to remind ourselves that Prayer is not confined to expression, that the spirit grows and strengthens in silence as well as in the spoken word. A strong desire springing from us when we are lying down is Prayer. As St Augustine says, "We often pray best when we say least, and worst when we say most." There is, no doubt, a virtue in silent communing: in listening to what God will say to us. This has been much impressed upon us lately, and it would be well if we practised it even for five minutes in the day. "In the life of the Curè d'Ars we read that an old man used to sit for hours in the village church gazing towards the altar. The Curè once asked him—'What are you doing during the long time which you spend in church?' 'Holy Father,' replied the old man, 'I am only loving God.'" Perhaps the most fruitful times of friendship are those when but little is said, or when the disciple, like St Mary, is sitting at the feet of her Friend. This is not easy for our active Western minds, but it is worth the effort. Quite independent of our meditation, of which I have spoken, it is well at times to be still whilst Christ speaks to us from the cradle, the Cross, or the sepulchre, helping us to understand what the Incarnation, the Atonement, or the Resurrection mean to us personally, what they imply in their far-reaching application to our own life. Our Lord, in that memorable scene

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of the feet washing, uses a metaphor which explains something of this. He had been telling St Peter that there was no necessity to wash any part of Him but the feet, "for he that is bathed," He said, "needeth not save to wash his feet." He then adds, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to it," as though His divine teaching had the same effect on the spirit as the bath had on the body, both cleansing and refreshing it. When, then, in some time of silence we lie still, taking in what we can of Divine truth, we are immersed in the knowledge of God and are cleansed as well as refreshed. So the spirit becomes educated and strengthened, and you move amongst your people as one who is familiar with the sights and sounds of the spirit world.

(c) *Diligent Prayer*.—It might be naturally assumed that there was no occasion to say anything of that active exercise of the spirit we call prayer. Surely everyone knows how to pray. Yet this is not the case. It is seen again and again, even with the clergy when at some unprepared moment one is called on to pray. A good man, gifted with remarkable administrative power, was once asked by the sick patient whom he was visiting to say an extempore prayer in addition to the Collects he was in the habit of using. With the courtesy that distinguished him he replied, "I am very sorry, but I am afraid that is not

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in my line." This meant that he had no power of free prayer. Developed in so many other ways he was still a child in speaking to God. How to ask for his friend he did not know. Yet he was a religious and earnest priest, praying daily for himself and the Church of God. He relied on the Prayer Book. But the danger of our beautiful prayers is they stifle freedom of communion with God. We fear to substitute our own poor expressions for their gentle eloquence. But we must put aside this temptation. We must cultivate the art of speaking with God, of making our requests known with fluency. It is true that it is not easy. Even men like the Apostles, who had given up everything for Christ's sake, felt their progress so unsatisfactory that they begged their Master to teach them. It is difficult :

1. Because God seems not only so far off but also so different from us. We feel the same sort of shyness that a peasant would feel in the presence of a king. *How can we speak to Him?*
2. Because we are not sure that our matters which, to us, are so interesting can be of any interest to Him. *What can we say to Him?*
3. He knows all about our needs. We cannot give Him any fresh information. The whole case is before Him before we speak of it. *Why should we speak to Him?*

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But all these difficulties are removed when we remember He is pure Love. No mother has such a joy in hearing her child learn to speak as He has in hearing our prayers. The whole of our life is interesting to Him, and He likes to hear us telling Him all about it in our own way; and the larger our faith in Him the more pleased He is. But Love hates insincerity and pretence, and we ought to be very careful lest we say a single word we don't mean. But our prayers must not only be real but well thought out.

And with this in view let me suggest this order:—

1. *Realise the Presence*.—“He that cometh to God must believe that He is,” *i.e.* must believe that God is alive and is present with him in the most intimate relationship, hearing and noting every word that he says. Sometimes a hymn, sometimes a text, and sometimes a picture brings this home to us. But don't speak till you realise it.

2. *Preparing the Prayer*.—This assumed, next arrange your prayer. “I will set my prayer in order,” said the Psalmist, “and will look out.” What are we going to say to Him? First, we shall naturally praise Him for His Beauty, Goodness, or Justice—naturally, I say, because this leads on to the other act of faith necessary. “Not only must we believe that He is, but that He is the rewarder of them

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that diligently seek Him." Our thought of God's character assures us that He will hear and answer; give us the best He has. Some words, like those of the Sanctus or a part of the Gloria in Excelsis, help here. Then cast your eye over all you are going to say and do, your engagements, the people you will meet, the subjects of your conversation, and be ready to ask God's blessing on actual needs.

3. *Asking*.—Now prepared, you will ask in your own words, or better still, interweaving them with those parts of Collects that seem specially suitable. You are out for the Kingdom of God, and will ask that it may be manifested in power. And as you pray you will feel that you are not a solitary individual going forth on a lonely mission, but an expression of a great realm of God which is ready to press in wherever you make an opening.

And this done, conscious of your own needs, you will ask that you may have the strength and wisdom to enable you to meet all emergencies. The Confirmation Collect will supply many thoughts and expressions. But above all, you must go forth, as St Paul says, "shod with the readiness of the Gospel of Peace," that readiness which springs from the knowledge that you are a forgiven man, that the blunders, misunderstandings, ill tempers, pride, and other things that may have spoiled yesterday, are all gone, remembered no more, that you are fully

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trusted again. But these and the difficulties to which they led make you sensible of certain dangers, trials, and temptations, and you ask, conscious of these, not to be led into them, but delivered from the power, the craft and subtlety of the devil. And so you follow the path He taught us to walk in prayer, keeping to the lines of the Lord's Prayer, and all this in your own way, with your own words, or such words of others as you have adopted. In the evening you recall all you asked for in the morning, and thank God for His wonderful happenings. The most marked of these you should note in your diary as a help for dark days.

So your spirit insensibly learns the language of prayer, knows how to express itself in the presence of the Unseen, and to be inspired by something of the harmony in which God dwells.

You are not troubled by questions as how prayer works any more than how you live and how one life influences other lives. The thought of changing the tone of Perfect Love into harmony with your desires never enters your mind, that would only be ridiculous ; but that your prayer somehow helps that will to get done, that it releases forces, removes obstacles, because it is in union with His Will, is certain. The events of each day prove it. Strange coincidences occur. You enter a cottage not quite certain how you will break

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the ice of reserve you have always found there, and to your surprise the man is at home and at once asks a leading question ; or you are just passing a door and are suddenly moved to call in, and find a child desperately ill ; or you meet by chance a woman in the street who tells you she is leaving the town on the morrow, your letter that night to the vicar of the parish she is going to leads to her conversion. You begin to feel what the Roman centurion felt when he asked Christ to help his servant, that He is the Centre of an infinitely wide ministry of angels, who at His word, in answer to prayer, go forth to do His Will.

4. *Interceding*.—It is this assurance that our prayers in some mysterious way lead to God's will being done that makes Intercession such an imperative duty. If our failure to pray leaves our friend without a help that we might have given him, how cruel our neglect is. But because we know God helps in answer to our prayers, we must not expect that we shall always see it or that it is at once effective. Monica's prayers for St Augustine did not fail at the beginning, and only succeed at the end of the long, waiting years. They worked immediately. As Dr Newman once said, a wall falls at the end because it has been gradually going day by day owing to the various forces playing upon it. The last force before the crash came was not necessarily the strongest. So each

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prayer we make has its effect, though it may not be seen for years.

You should have a special time for Intercession, and it is well to place the names of those for whom you pray in a book, with the date when you began to pray for them. Dr Horton tells us, in his autobiography, that he did this, and that in the course of years they became a storehouse of arguments for the reality and value of prayer: "I discovered that the answers to prayer are not as a rule sudden or startling, but gradual. . . . Only when time is allowed, and you turn back on the records of the past, do you stand in awe before the demonstration that your prayer, so helpless and imperfect, going up into the silent heavens, has been allowed to work and to achieve unexpected results."

Perhaps of all your duties this habit of prayer is the most effective. Learn then to know it, love it, and believe in it. For just as you practise it at definite settled times, so will it spread itself over the whole life, and then, in the old Scripture language, you "walk with God" and out of that close fellowship the light of Christ, which is in you through His indwelling, shines forth before men, bringing warmth and illumination wherever you go.

5. *Helping the Church.*—On the reality of your private prayers will depend the power of those you say in public. Daily Matins and

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Evensong is your rule, and if you have learnt the happiness and effectiveness of secret communing with God you will be thankful for the necessity that is laid upon you to join in the prayers and praises of the Anglican Communion throughout the world. From East and West, from continents and islands, rises the same prayers and the same praises, and in them we have our part. The value of such wide intercession and thanksgiving is unspeakable. We may be alone in the Church, but as on touching the pneumatic regulator of the organ and pulling out a stop, the building is filled with sound and beautiful harmony, so directly we begin our office the spiritual waves from other seas break in upon our little shore and fill the dry pools with life-giving water. Our whole parish is refreshed. So too our little refreshes other places. But further, there is more in it than this. Not only, as Canon Liddon says, does the priest through this habit make interest for his people with the All Merciful God, but it promotes to an almost indefinite extent his ministerial capabilities. It deepens our familiarity with the words of Scripture and the formularies of the Church. We are constrained, almost in self-defence, to make continual efforts to penetrate more and more thoroughly the deeper meaning of what we repeat so frequently. Divine truths are stamped upon our souls not merely as on that of a mature intellect

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by enforced confession to conviction and argument, but as on the soul of a little child by way of frequent repetition and almost of physical indentation.

But again, this duty helps us practically. The priest who is much among his people knows how effective is a reference to the lesson or psalm of the day, as proving to the flock that he has been with God, even though they have not followed him ; and men often remark how the daily services seem to coincide, as if by a providential guidance, with the needs of their daily parochial work ; and how the day psalm or the lesson for the day suggest themselves irresistibly as most opportune when a sinner has to be warned, or a penitent to be cheered, or a deathbed to be visited—prescribing to them at the needful hour “what they shall say and what they shall speak.”

You lose, then, much for yourself, as well as for your flock, when you omit your public offices ; but you must take heed, in this duty especially, that your thought keeps pace with your words. The danger of “vain repetitions” must be resolutely faced.

I have now done, and as you look upon this sketch of the field I have attempted to outline, you will wonder, perhaps, at the shape it has taken. The practical, social, and intellectual side of the ministry with which you were familiar seem to have been sacrificed to the spiritual.

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You will be inclined to say to me, "You complain that in the estimate of the clerical life, too much attention has been given to the intellectual and administrative side of the work. But have you not yourself erred in the opposite direction, by over-emphasising the spiritual side." It may be so. But if so, the present condition of the Christian Church is partly responsible. Christian Science flourishes because the Church has neglected her gift of spiritual healing; Spiritualism is widespread (*i.e.* people of all classes persist in saying there is something in it) because the Church has been silent on the realities and powers of the world to come. The reality of another existence has, through so-called spiritualistic phenomena, flashed upon their minds with the power of a new discovery. Such people have repeated the words, "I believe in the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the Body and the Life everlasting," hundreds of times, but they have meant nothing. If, then, the Church is to meet the needs of the day it must be felt to be, primarily, a spiritual Body with spiritual powers. The machinery must be lost in the magnitude of the spiritual effects that follow the ministry; the social organisations must show a marked difference from similar organisations in the world, inasmuch as they lead to a fuller and deeper fellowship. And the parson must be regarded as one who, though quick to show sympathy with all parts

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of human life, finds their chief significance in their relation to God. They are mainly significant to him as manifestations of the working of the Spirit of God, and they only reach their final goal through His inspiration. He is not, then, as so often popularly represented, one who has no concern in this present world, being entirely wrapped up in the thoughts of the world to come. This and that world are one, not in their materialistic outward side, for there is no fixity here and probably none there, but in their inward spirit, the same spiritual principles operating in both. With these he must be familiar, and therefore they have been brought to your attention.

Life is increasingly difficult with its wide variety of engrossing pleasures and perplexing duties. And many are falling by the way because they find no free moment to be still. Whirled along by many engagements, they gradually consent to the fatal doctrine that they are caught in some mighty mill-stream against which it is useless to contend. This will one day wash them to that shore whither it wills. To save such who have given up the struggle with life is a task beyond the powers of the wisest. Only he is likely to be successful who has known in his own life the power of God, and can, therefore, speak out of his own experience. And this knowledge has been won, not in his public duties, but in that time

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of silence and loneliness with God when battles have been fought and won. "Behind the Master's public ministry, through which He moved with such amazing stedfastness, not to be deflected by bribes, nor halted by fears, nor discouraged by weariness, lay the battle in the desert. There He fought out in prayer the controlling principles of His life. Behind His patience in Pilate's court, and His fidelity on Calvary, lay the battle in Gethsemane. There the whole battle was fought through, and the issue settled before the face of God." And so behind all the endeavours we make with men and women, boys and girls, there lies the quiet, private place where prayer is wont to be made, and where, long before we come to actual grips with the difficulties that confront us, we have won the battle and are certain of the issue.

*The verse on page 195 is entitled "His Witnesses," and is by "A. J. F,"*

*While this book was being passed for press, the author came across it in "The Church Missionary Society Outlook," and it was so appropriate to his subject that he quoted it on page 195. He was unaware of the author's name or of the fact that the poem was complete in itself. Due acknowledgment is now being made to the author.*







